

Church's Great Picture

*The  
Heart  
of the Andes*

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Kevin J. Avery

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The Metropolitan Museum of Art  
New York

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## Foreword

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Frederic Church, for the period of some twenty-five years encompassing the Civil War, occupied a preeminent position in the realm of American culture. During those years of remarkable growth in the intellectual life of the United States, from approximately 1855 to 1875, Church was his nation's most famous painter and a pivotal figure in the world of art and society that centered on New York City. The exhibition of his pictures that were deliberately produced as individual showpieces became public events surrounded by a hubbub of advertising, hucksterism, and critical acclaim. Although Church was applauded as a leading painter of landscapes as early as the late 1840s, it was with the display of his *Niagara* in New York in 1857, and its rapturous reception by critics and the public there and later in London, that he became a figure of renown at the age of thirty-one. However, it was the exhibition of *The Heart of the Andes* in 1859 that placed Church, without any question, at the summit of the New York art world. Church's friend and promoter the Reverend Louis Le Grand Noble helped him to that distinction with this zealous pronouncement on the picture printed in the booklet accompanying its exhibition: "A splendid triumph. A masterpiece among the masterpieces of the world. And the painter stands out

in line with those whose presence has passed from the earth but whose great names in art never perish."<sup>1</sup>

The advent of *The Heart of the Andes* fixed Church in the national public gaze as a cultural leader, in which capacity he performed diligently and significantly until he faded from view in the late 1870s. Aside from the many fine canvases Church painted during his years of ascendancy, the most lasting contributions he made to the improvement of American life were his roles in nurturing Central Park, in establishing Niagara Falls as an international park, finally achieved in the mid-1880s, and in the founding of The Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1870. Church was active on several committees formed late in 1869 to create an art museum in New York. Those committees and their supporters constituted the core of the city's artistic, literary, commercial, religious, and social structure; because of his importance in that august assembly, Church was elected a founding trustee and member of the first executive committee of the Museum on January 31, 1870.<sup>2</sup>

Frederick Law Olmsted, co-creator of Central Park and a central organizer of the Metropolitan, arranged for Church to be named a New York park commissioner in 1870. Olmsted subsequently explained in a letter why Church

was so important in the move to establish the Museum as a public institution and to help in the governance of Central Park at a time when the city of New York was escaping from the crooked control of “Boss” Tweed and Mayor A. Oakey Hall:

[Church is] a quiet, retired man, a model of rank and file citizenship, but who in his special calling has earned the respect and regard of the Community—called on at last to serve the public in an office where his special training will be of value, in the place of a professional politician, one who is so much the opposite in his qualifications—Sweeney. . . .<sup>3</sup> The appointment of Church signifies more . . . that offices (for the present) are not for sale . . . but are to seek and draw in the best men. . . . We are anxious as a matter of propriety that the art department should be recognized—that the public utility of devotion to art and the study of nature in a public service of this kind should be recognized and Church seemed on the whole the most appropriate and respectable man to express this.<sup>4</sup>

During the final twenty-five years of his life, when he was suffering from both ill health and diminishing popular

regard, Church immersed himself in sketching, augmenting Olana, his dream mansion, gentleman-farming, raising a family, managing investments, enjoying friendships, reading, fishing, and traveling. Although he remained a trustee of the Metropolitan Museum until 1886 and continued to support its activities, he had essentially disappeared from public consciousness by the time of his death in 1900.

The long process of rehabilitating Church’s reputation began seven weeks after his death, with a memorial exhibition, “Paintings by Frederic E. Church, N.A.,” organized and presented by this Museum. Many years later, benefiting from the scholarly attentions of dedicated researchers, especially the late David Huntington, Church’s name once again occupies a place of honor in the list of American artists. It is appropriate, given his seminal relationship to the Metropolitan Museum, that the present exhibition and publication devoted to his most celebrated painting, one of the Museum’s great treasures, be presented now, as we approach the observance of the 125th anniversary of the establishment of the Metropolitan Museum.

John K. Howat

*The Lawrence A. Fleischman Chairman of the  
Departments of American Art*

<sup>1</sup> The Reverend Louis L. Noble, *The Heart of the Andes* (New York, 1859), p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Winifred E. Howe, *A History of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York, 1913), pp. 116–123.

<sup>3</sup> Peter B. Sweeney (who spelled his name without a final “e”) had decamped

hurriedly to France when his arrest for malfeasance became imminent.

<sup>4</sup> Letter from Olmsted to Charles Loring Brace, Nov. 24, 1871, quoted in Laura Wood Roper, *FLO: A Biography of Frederick Law Olmsted* (Baltimore and London, 1973), p. 331.

## Acknowledgments

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The original impetus for this publication and for the exhibition it accompanies was the modern re-creation of the lost original frame of *The Heart of the Andes* (fig. 20). For the splendid retrospective of Frederic Church's paintings at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., in 1989–90, curator Franklin Kelly and exhibition designer Gaillard F. Ravenel constructed a facsimile of the frame that resurrected the dramatic impression created by the painting when it was first exhibited in 1859. After the exhibition, the National Gallery kindly made a long-term loan of the frame to the Metropolitan Museum, which owns the painting. Subsequently modified to conform even more closely to the original, the frame again serves as the setting for the picture around which the present exhibition has been built. I am happy to acknowledge gratefully the significance of the National Gallery's loan.

The art of Frederic Church is so multidimensional—in its sources, creation, meaning, promotion, commerce, and influence—that any study of his most famous painting unavoidably relies on a bedrock of distinguished scholarship, which humbles even as it impels the student to fresh discoveries and insights. I am grateful to the principal authorities in Frederic Church studies, all of whose work is

liberally cited in the notes and from most of whom I have received generous personal assistance and advice: the late David C. Huntington and Albert Ten Eyck Gardner, Gerald L. Carr, Franklin Kelly, and Katherine E. Manthorne.

At the Metropolitan this project was supported, encouraged, and assisted by many individuals and departments, especially Philippe de Montebello, director; John K. Howat, Lawrence A. Fleischman Chairman of the Departments of American Art; and H. Barbara Weinberg, curator of American Paintings and Sculpture. Mr. Howat also scrutinized my manuscript with great care. The special decorative demands of the exhibition elicited the enthusiastic participation of several of my colleagues in the American Wing: Morrison Heckscher, Peter M. Kenny, Amelia Peck, Thayer Tolles, and Emely Bramson. Special appreciation is owed to Don Templeton for his skillful rebuilding of the frame and to Gary Burnett, Edward Di Farnecio, and Sean Farrell for their usual patient and efficient mounting of the exhibition.

The felicitous design of the exhibition was conceived by Daniel Kershaw, assisted by Barbara Weiss and in consultation with David Harvey. Several of the Museum's conservators performed restoration work on objects loaned to



the exhibition, specifically Dorothy Mahon, Marjorie Shelley, and Mindell Dubansky. Special thanks go to Bruce Schwarz for his fine color photography of *The Heart of the Andes*.

Individuals from two institutions in particular deserve special recognition for assistance with my research and for the bulk of the loans to the exhibition: James Anthony Ryan, site manager at the Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, New York, and his staff, especially Karen Zukowski, Heidi Hill, and Robin Eckerle. Approval and processing of the Olana loans came from the New York Bureau of Historic Sites Collection Care Center at Peebles Island, New York, where I was assisted by Anne Cassidy and Joyce Zucker. At the Cooper-Hewitt, National Museum of Design, Smithsonian Institution, New York, where the majority of Church's drawings are preserved, I thank present and former staff of the Department of Drawings and Prints: Marilyn Symmes, Elizabeth Horwitz, Megan Smith, Lisa Podos, and Costanza Bachman.

At other lending institutions I was generously assisted by John Coffey, North Carolina Museum of Art; Joseph Jacobs of the Newark Museum; Roger Mandell, Andrew Robison, and Carlotta Owens of the National Gallery of Art; Roberta Waddell, Mary Boone Bowling, and Barbara Woytowicz of the New York Public Library; William A. Joyce and Charles Greene of the Princeton University Libraries; and Kenneth A. Lohf of Butler Library at Columbia University.

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My research included ten days in Ecuador following the path of Frederic Church, a trip made possible by a substan-

tial grant from the Museum's Professional Travel Stipends program. My acquaintance with Barbara B. Millhouse, president of the Reynolda House Museum of American Art and a Church scholar with whom I have had very fruitful discussion, led to an ideal travel itinerary arranged by her husband, Nicholas Millhouse, who provided me with the expert guidance of María Garcés, César Arcos, and Lenin Villacis. In Ecuador I gained much additional firsthand knowledge about the country from Marcela García Grosse-Luemern, Patricio Mena, and Carlos Perez. Since my return, I have received invaluable information from Juan Pío Montúfar Freile and José Manuel Jijón y Caamaño.

Mr. Mena's assistance in Ecuador led me to his colleague at the New York Botanical Garden, James Luteyn, who identified many of the plants in the foreground of *The Heart of the Andes* in consultation with colleagues in New York and elsewhere who are identified in the notes to the essay. Assistance in the identification of birds and insects represented in the painting was provided by specialists at the American Museum of Natural History: Mary Le Croy, Emanuel Levine, and Eric Quinter.

The preparation of this publication was energetically shepherded by Barbara Burn. Emily Walter edited my very raw manuscript with remarkable appreciation and discretion. For advice, friendship, and encouragement during the term of this project, I thank the following: Annette Blaugrund, Tammis Groft, Donna Hassler, Mary Lublin, Stephen Quinn, Andrew Spahr, and Michael Wolf. Nancy Gillette has been a virtual co-curator of this project, an indispensable third hand in every phase of its execution. For their love and patience with me, I thank my mother, my sisters and brothers, my children, Peter and Laura, and my wife, Marianne Kormos Avery.

K.J.A.



New York was a city of well under a million people in 1859. Broadway was already a mecca of elite and popular amusement, but it was the Broadway in the neighborhood of City Hall, not the Broadway of Times Square. The theater was lively and various, and there were panorama shows and P. T. Barnum's American Museum—of natural history and humbug. For art, however, there was little in the city that can be said to have forecast the cultural citadels of Fifth Avenue today. An art gallery then was, as often as not, a place to buy books or picture frames, as well as a place to look at paintings. The big art event each year was the annual spring exhibition at the National Academy of Design, America's premier art institution, where hundreds of submissions from both professionals and amateurs were massed on the walls like produce in a market. Perhaps the most current forum for art was the receptions conducted by the painters themselves in their studios, where select visitors were invited to view works in progress or recently completed.

But in the memories of those still alive at the turn of the century, the art world of the pre-Civil War years crystallized around the exhibition of a single picture. In a period of three weeks in May 1859 a painting of South American scenery

with the evocative title *The Heart of the Andes* (colorplates 1–4), by a rising young artist named Frederic Edwin Church, lured 12,000 people to the Exhibition Room of the new Studio Building on Tenth Street, in which Church had recently taken a work space (see fig. 21). After the exhibition, the painting went to England and awed the public there; by the fall, it had returned to begin an American tour that lasted more than a year. As late as 1864 it was still garnering special attention as one of the principal attractions at the art gallery of the Metropolitan Sanitary Fair, held in New York, in aid of wounded Union soldiers. The sweeping changes that overtook American art in succeeding years, as well as the obscurity into which Church eventually fell, could never quite efface the memory of the odd seismic phenomenon that was the premiere of *The Heart of the Andes*.

The image that awaited the curious and left them in wonder seems a quaint thing to label art. It is large, but its size does not intimidate. The first glance from a distance may vaguely oppress the viewer, like contemplating a steaming terrarium from nearby. The main features, two masses of matted vegetation backed by a dun-colored mound mantled in clouds, seem to crowd the picture space. The glare of spectral white passages at the base and at the upper

left gives way to the images of a waterfall and a snow-capped mountain. The picture seems too wide at the left, denying the centrality of the waterfall and the mound above it. The trees impend heavily; the surface is feverishly mottled. An arc of open blue sky seems the only relief from the tyranny of the terrain. The sense of suffocation is alleviated, surprisingly, as one draws close to the picture, which discloses the glinting of individuated leaves, festoons of flowers, exotic birds, even butterflies, a tiny church on a remote plain, and an ethereal rainbow. The artist seems at once to have made visible the virtually microscopic and to have rendered miles in miniature.

With *The Heart of the Andes*, the question “What does one see?” must yield to “What can one find?” The foreground is an infinite welter of organic life. On the right, hanging vines and moss, tree ferns, a pendulous bird’s nest, a gay blue-blossomed shrub, a red-breasted crow, passionflowers, and skunk cabbage are all rendered with such precision that the artist seems to know them by name. The succession of small revelations extends underground, to the roots of massive trees exposed by the erosion of a riverbank. On the left, near the butterflies, are an emerald-hued quetzal, a flowering philodendron, budding orchids, and berrying bromeliads. Carved on the bark of a broken tree shaft are the artist’s name and the painting’s date, which are illuminated by an obliging sunbeam. The blaze marks the nearby path taken by a peasant couple to a pilgrimage or a memorial cross of wood, which overlooks the river gorge. At a bend in the river several leagues beyond the cross, a country church and village houses are relieved against the forest green. From the church, the terrain rises onto a savanna and then mounts the brooding ridge, where the faint thread of a cascade seeks to join the river refreshing the foreground. To the left rising smoke, answering the falling water, signals a human refuge on the raw slopes. Drifting clouds and wheeling condors define the daunting altitude of the ridge, evoking wintry weather a



Fig. 1. Frederic Edwin Church, ca. 1860. Photograph courtesy New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, N.Y.

hemisphere away from the foreground jungle. The clouds part to reveal the snow-mountain, a polar cap that reigns in another world.

### The Artist, His Mentors, and His Mission

Frederic Edwin Church (1826–1900; fig. 1), the painter of this uncanny panorama, was hardly unknown in 1859, either in America or abroad.<sup>1</sup> An audience for *The Heart of the Andes* had been virtually guaranteed by the exhibition two years before in New York and London of his *Niagara* (fig. 2), still one of the most startling images of what was even then a household name of American tourism.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, as *The Heart of the Andes* opened in New York, *Niagara* remained on view in Boston. From as early as 1845, when Church was nineteen, a succession of his works shown at

the National Academy of Design and the American Art-Union in New York signaled the emergence of an extraordinary talent in landscape painting, by then the most popular genre in American art. There seemed a measure of predestination in Church's rise. He was born in 1826 into the family of Joseph Church, a prosperous Hartford businessman and strict Calvinist.<sup>3</sup> The parent was skeptical of his son's desire to study art, but once Frederic had persuaded him, the elder Church actually advanced his career. Through his father's influence, Church was accepted as the first of only two pupils of the country's leading landscape painter and the founder of the Hudson River School, Thomas Cole (1801–1848).<sup>4</sup> He lived with Cole's family in Catskill, New York, from 1844 to 1846. The teacher declared that his student had "the finest eye for drawing in the world."<sup>5</sup> Cole taught Church what he could, chiefly by guiding him on sketching tours in the neighborhood of Catskill and by impressing the young man with his abiding faith in nature's divinity, often expressed in his pictures. When Cole died in

1848, political and philosophical authority over the American landscape school passed to his contemporary Asher B. Durand. Durand, elected president of the National Academy of Design in 1845, advocated a more naturalistic representation of landscape than Cole. But real leadership of the new generation of landscape painters was seized by Church through his astonishing paintings, which raised the standard of naturalism well above anything Durand was capable of and yet sustained the drama and moral idealism that had informed Cole's work. *The Heart of the Andes* assured Church's preeminence, and for two decades to come, he would dazzle the public with a succession of ambitious landscapes of faraway places. He would, however, never attempt to express as much or to appeal as widely as he did in 1859.

Church's mission was determined in some measure by the successive guidance of his father and Cole. To his father Church sought to prove that, as an artist, he could achieve a prosperous tradesman's level of worldly success—as he



Fig. 2. Frederic Edwin Church, *Niagara*, 1857. Oil on canvas, 42 1/2 x 90 1/2 in. Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Museum Purchase, Gallery Fund

eventually did. For Cole Church quickly reached, then exceeded, his teacher's high technical standard. More important, Church perpetuated, less overtly than Cole, the Christian significance evinced in Cole's most characteristic pictures (see fig. 3). Fortunately for Church, the practical backbone of his father, fortified by his Protestant faith, and the religious idealism of Cole, modified by the older painter's keen sensitivity to the domestic art market, perfectly reflected the materialism and religious revivalism that preoccupied the nation as Church came of age in the 1840s. But the intensity of that revival would not long survive Cole's death in 1848. For Church, more attracted than Cole to the particularities of the natural world and less seduced by the medium of paint itself, a third role model emerged about 1849 to contribute signally in shaping the young artist's ambitions.

Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859; fig. 4) was a German naturalist then living in Potsdam.<sup>6</sup> Church came to know him only through reading the English translation of his ultimate work, *Cosmos* (fig. 5.), published in London in 1849. *The Heart of the Andes* (and, to a lesser extent, Church's other South American pictures) may be regarded as an illustration of *Cosmos* and a portrait of Humboldt's ideas.



Fig. 3. Thomas Cole, *The Voyage of Life*, 1840. Oil on canvas, 51 3/4 x 78 1/4 in. Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Museum of Art, Utica, N.Y.



Fig. 4. Julius Schrader, *Baron Alexander von Humboldt* (1769–1859). Oil on canvas, 62 1/8 x 54 3/8 in. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of H. O. Havemeyer, 1889 (89.20)

If the name of Charles Darwin marks for us the most enduring scientific mind of the nineteenth century, Darwin himself and many of his contemporaries esteemed Humboldt above all others.<sup>7</sup> The translation of *Cosmos* and other works by Humboldt into a host of languages over a century ago indicates that Church's enthusiasm for him was also popularly shared.<sup>8</sup> In his long and active life, Humboldt was immensely productive, both in the field and in his writings; his orbit was wide, encompassing the Old World and the New, and the many who knew him were almost unanimously impressed by the profound humanity that informed his intellect. It is this quality that, to the post-Victorian reader, lends his books much of their appeal.

Humboldt died in May 1859, just as *The Heart of the Andes* appeared in New York. The multivolume *Cosmos* represents

the culmination of a career that had two principal phases. The first was exploratory. Humboldt's early fascination with geology, cultivated both in the university and the copper mines of Prussia, was frustrated by the Napoleonic Wars, so with his own noble inheritance he mounted a five-year expedition, beginning in 1799, to Spanish America, exploring present-day Venezuela, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Central America, Mexico, and Cuba. The data he and his colleague, Aimé Bonpland, collected on geography, geology, magnetic fields, relative temperature and barometric pressure, botany, even the social and economic conditions of Spanish America was overwhelming and would take years to assess and publish. Humboldt achieved early fame, however, by climbing what was then believed to be the world's highest mountain, Chimborazo in Ecuador, the snow peak portrayed

in *The Heart of the Andes*, measuring 20,577 feet. An impassable chasm prevented him from quite reaching the summit, but no man had ever ascended higher above sea level and Humboldt's record of 19,300 feet would stand for thirty years.<sup>9</sup> When news of the feat reached Europe, it is said, Napoleon's exploits were briefly thrown into shadow.<sup>10</sup> By the time Humboldt visited the United States in 1804, his reputation had preceded him. The artist and scientific amateur Charles Willson Peale welcomed Humboldt in Philadelphia, escorted him to the nation's capital to be hosted by President Jefferson, and then painted the explorer's portrait for the gallery of "illustrious Personages" in his natural-history museum.<sup>11</sup>

Humboldt's succeeding years, constituting the second phase of his career, were spent in Paris and Berlin, publishing, lecturing, and teaching. From his experience in the New World and his vast reading emerged the principles of the unity of terrestrial and celestial phenomena upon which he consolidated his reputation. *Cosmos* was the most ambitious attempt up to that time to observe and intuit those principles, which was undertaken through a detailed description of everything the author had learned about the earthly and heavenly worlds. *Cosmos* may be thought of as the last great treatise on nature in the classical tradition, as well as a seminal work of modern ecology, the study of natural habitats. It projected a unifying view of nature that anticipates the momentous, sometimes controversial scientific inquiries of the twentieth century, from unified field theory—the reduction of universal forces to one set of laws—to the Gaia hypothesis—the conception of the earth as a self-regulating superorganism. In *Cosmos* Humboldt stated his grand vision in a graceful, humanistic voice, accessible to any literate person.

For a landscape painter of Church's origins, ambitions, and talent, the significance of *Cosmos* was manifold. To begin with, Humboldt provided a generous historical review of verbal and pictorial descriptions of the world, including

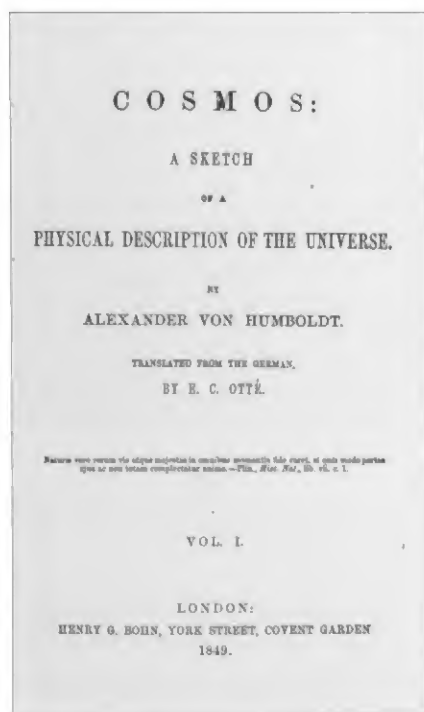


Fig. 5. Alexander von Humboldt, Title page from Church's copy of Humboldt's *Cosmos* (London, 1849). New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, N.Y.

landscape painting, as a foil for his own. He praised the “harmonious repose” in the pictures of the old masters—Claude Lorrain, the Poussins, and the Dutch masters,<sup>12</sup> all of whom had influenced Cole and, by extension, Church. He also fervently promoted the practice of making colored sketches in the field for studio use, which was a relatively new approach to landscape painting.<sup>13</sup> Cole had only infrequently painted out of doors, but Durand was a pioneer of outdoor painting in America and, by the 1850s, was recommending the practice to young artists. By the late 1840s, Church had begun supplementing his pencil work with field sketches in oil.<sup>14</sup>

More essential to Church’s course was that Humboldt revealed to him an ideal natural—and American—subject. In the midst of the Andes at the equator, the naturalist had observed a microcosm of the earth from the torrid through the temperate through the frigid zones:

There, at a single glance, the eye surveys majestic palms, humid forests of bambusa, and the varied species of museaceae, while above these forms of tropical vegetation appear oaks, medlars, the sweetbriar, and umbelliferous plants, as in our European homes. There, as the traveller turns his eyes to the vault of heaven, a single glance embraces the constellation of the Southern Cross, the Magellanic cloud, and the guiding stars of the constellation of the Bear, as they circle round the arctic pole. There the depths of the earth and the vaults of heaven display all the richness of their forms and the variety of their phenomena. There the different climates are ranged the one above the other, stage by stage, like the vegetable zones, whose succession they limit; and there the observer may readily trace the laws that regulate the diminution of heat, as they stand indelibly inscribed on the rocky walls and abrupt declivities of the Cordilleras.<sup>15</sup>

From sultry jungle to icebound mountaintop, Humboldt linked the change in species and quantity of plant life to diminutions in average temperature that find their counterpart in the botanical and climatic changes as one moves from the equator to the poles.<sup>16</sup> With the egocentricity of the Renaissance man that he was, Humboldt pictorially linked his “geography of plants”<sup>17</sup> with his greatest exploratory feat, the ascent of Chimborazo, in an illustration (fig. 6) to his *Personal Narrative of Travels to the Equinoctial Regions* (first English translation, 1814–29).<sup>18</sup> Church’s South American pictures would in greater or lesser degree characterize the global environmental range of the equatorial Americas; *The Heart of the Andes* may additionally allude to Humboldt’s climb.

Church’s religious sympathy would also have responded to the associations Humboldt drew between “the perpetual spring” he found in parts of the equatorial New World and that of the Garden of Eden.<sup>19</sup> The naturalist could not resist citing those, like Christopher Columbus, who confused the New World, which he first took to be Asia, with the virgin preserve of Adam and Eve: “The grateful coolness of the evening air, the ethereal purity of the starry firmament, the balmy fragrance of flowers, wafted to [Columbus] by the land breeze—all led him to suppose . . . that he was approaching . . . the sacred abode of our first parents.”<sup>20</sup>

Not least appealing to Church would have been Humboldt’s revelations about the anatomy of the Andes, which are part of the Pacific Rim of mountain ranges, the so-called Ring of Fire, thrust up by grinding continental plates. In a realm of volcanic chains and frequent earthquakes, the terrain exposes the dynamic forces by which the continents were formed and continually reshape themselves. The South American landscape thus evoked for Humboldt not simply the bower of Genesis; even more compellingly, it exposed geography in the very act of creation: “It is not organic matter alone that is continually undergoing change

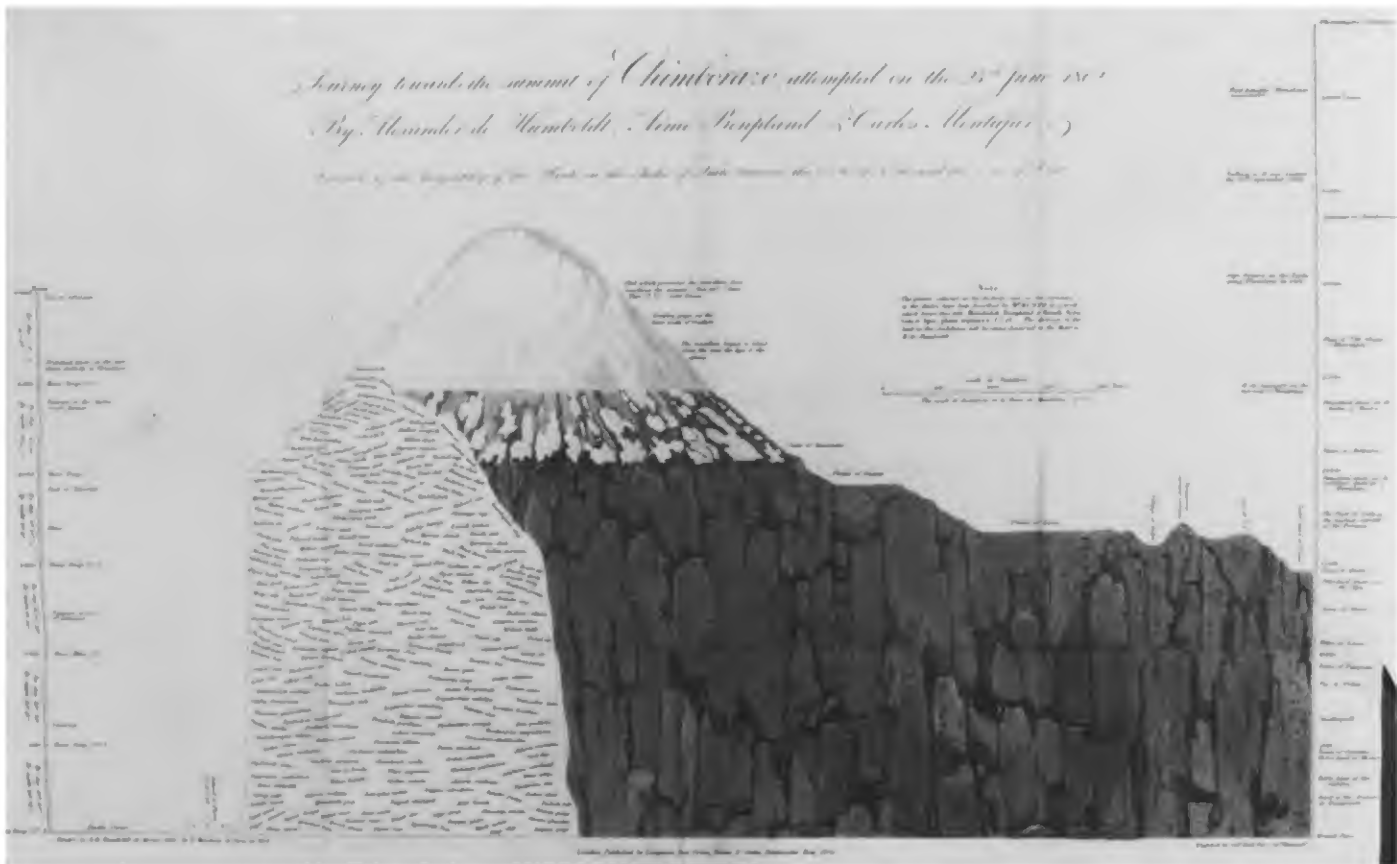


Fig. 6. Sidney Hall, after Alexander von Humboldt and F. Marchais, *Journey towards the summit of Chimborazo, attempted on the 23rd June 1802*. By Alexander de Humboldt, Aimé Bonpland & Carlos Montúfar. (*A Sketch of the Geography of the Plants in the Andes of Quito...*), engraving from Alexander von Humboldt, *Personal Narrative of Travels in the Equinoctial Regions of the New Continent*, vol. VII (London, 1829). Princeton University Libraries, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections. Humboldt calibrated the height of Chimborazo (20,577 feet) on the right in toises, each measuring just over six feet. The height scale includes the relative height of mountains in Europe and Asia. Mean temperature measured at regular intervals during Humboldt's ascent are given at left. Plant species endemic to the various altitudes from sea level to snowline are printed in the appropriate locations in the inset.

and being dissolved to form new combinations. The globe itself reveals at every phase of its existence the mystery of its former conditions.”<sup>21</sup>

What would ultimately have personalized Humboldt's message for Church was his reminder to artists that the ideal natural world he had conceived had been virtually neglected by landscape painters:

These noble regions have hitherto been visited mostly by travellers, whose want of artistical education, and whose differently directed scientific pursuits, afforded

few opportunities of their perfecting themselves in landscape painting. Only very few amongst them have been susceptible of seizing on the total impression of the tropical zone.”<sup>22</sup>

Humboldt thus petitioned for artistic attention to the tropics:

Are we not justified in hoping that landscape painting will flourish with a new and hitherto unknown brilliancy when artists of merit shall more frequently pass the narrow limits of the Mediterranean, and



when they shall be enabled, far in the interior of continents, in the humid mountain valleys of the tropical world, to seize, with the genuine freshness of a pure and youthful spirit, on the true image of the varied forms of nature?<sup>23</sup>

It is clear from Humboldt's words that his imagined audience was European; Church may have resented the naturalist's ignorance of American "artists of merit," but his status as the New World's most talented landscape painter ordained him to fulfill the mission prescribed by Humboldt, nothing less than the delineation of the earth. To Church the North American, South America was also more accessible than it was to the European.

American interests, heretofore directed primarily to the West, strayed southward with increasing frequency in the nineteenth century. At about the time Church discovered Humboldt, the United States had forcibly appropriated Texas from Mexico. Even before the discovery of gold in California in 1849, the volume of emigration west had prompted the federal government to seek transit rights through the Isthmus of Panama in order to shorten the long boat passage around South America to the West Coast. No fewer than three naval scientific expeditions to South America were undertaken just before Church embarked on his first trip there in 1853.<sup>24</sup> The remarkable alignment of Church's artistic interest with American enterprise in South America was personified in his friend and chosen companion on that journey, Cyrus W. Field. Later the projector of the first transatlantic telegraph cable, Field had made a small fortune in paper manufacturing and wished to scout commercial opportunities in the southern hemisphere.<sup>25</sup>

The initial effect of Church's reading of Humboldt may have been simply to confirm the artist's enthusiasm for travel. As he became independent of Cole, Church wid-

ened his orbit beyond the customary suburban New England and New York sketching haunts of American landscape painters to include the wilderness of Maine, Nova Scotia, western Virginia, Kentucky, and the upper Mississippi River region. Church, who was often attracted to scenic landmarks, may have visited Niagara Falls as early as 1849. But his fascination with sites such as the Natural Bridge in Virginia and the Mammoth Caves of Kentucky may well have been informed by Humboldt's passionate sermons on geology.<sup>26</sup> Americans' curiosity about such sites was amplified, moreover, by the mid-century phenomenon of the moving panorama, a travelogue rendered on hundreds of yards of canvas and displayed in a theater setting by being cranked between two reels hidden behind a stage proscenium. Such "moving pictures" were amateurish and cheaply made but, depending upon the rhetorical gifts of those who narrated them, often held tremendous appeal. The moving panoramas surely quickened the appetite for travel so that their producers wandered ever farther afield in search of new subjects, just as Church did for his paintings.<sup>27</sup>



Fig. 7. Frederic Edwin Church, *New England Scenery*, 1851. Oil on canvas, 36 x 53 in. George Walter Vincent Smith Art Museum, George Walter Vincent Smith Collection, Springfield, Mass.

Fortified by both Humboldt and the exploratory drive of his era, Church's wanderlust became markedly reflected in his art by 1850. His trips to Mount Katahdin in Maine and to the Natural Bridge each led to striking pictures.<sup>28</sup> Ironically, it was the painting entitled *New England Scenery* of 1851 (fig. 7) that signaled the ambition culminating in *The Heart of the Andes*.<sup>29</sup> The subject may have been local, but the feeling of the picture was continental. It was Church's first true composite landscape. The broad, paternal trees, mountainous cumuli, and amber light were familiar from Cole's paintings. But, unlike Cole, Church exploited these conventional devices, originating in the paintings of Claude Lorrain and Aelbert Cuyp, to assimilate sketches taken in widely scattered locations—Maine, New Hampshire, and New York State. The minute scale and the articulation of figures and distant objects convey a spatial amplitude that surpassed Cole and the American conception of the parochial eastern landscape. This New England evokes the West, an association strengthened by the Conestoga wagon in the foreground, pointed toward the sunset. As *The Heart of the Andes* later would do with equatorial South America, *New England Scenery* summarizes the nature of North America into which the artist was born and came of age as a painter, and from which he would launch out to larger horizons.

### On the Trail of Humboldt, 1853

Church made two trips to South America, in 1853 and 1857.<sup>30</sup> Both tours (see map, fig. 8) were determined by the routes and objectives chosen by Humboldt half a century earlier, in 1801–2, when the naturalist had gone south through present-day Colombia and Ecuador, climaxing his journey in the ascent of Chimborazo. Church's earlier trip, from April to October 1853, was by far the longer of the two. In company with Cyrus Field, Church sailed from New

York to Savanilla, the port of Barranquilla, Colombia. From there, they ascended the Magdalena River by steamer and canoe to Honda, its farthest navigable point, which they reached on May 23. The rest of the trip they made on mule and on foot, traveling south through Bogotá, Cartago, Popoyán, Pasto, and across the border into Ecuador. There the Andes assumes the form of two parallel ridges, or cordilleras, bounding an elevated plain, which the artist followed to Quito, Machachi, Riobamba, then southwest and descending the Andes to his port of departure, Guayaquil, which he left on the first of October. In five months in South America, Church and Field covered at least a thousand miles of rugged, primitive terrain.

Church's personal record of the first trip is copious, in the form of both diaries and sketches.<sup>31</sup> Both his comments and the paintings he made on his return reveal that Humboldt's perceptions regularly guided his activities and observations. Already at Barranquilla, a relatively dry and barren place, he felt overwhelmed by the variety of vegetation and bird life.<sup>32</sup> A devotee of sunsets and twilights, he was frustrated by the abrupt nightfall near the equator, which plunged the landscape into darkness.<sup>33</sup> Near Bogotá, at the dramatic Tequendama Falls, which he later painted,<sup>34</sup> he noted the contrast of climate and flora at each end of the cascade, some 1,400 feet high: "At the top of the fall you are in what is called the cold country with trees and plants and fruits of the temperate climates; at the bottom grow palms, oranges etc."<sup>35</sup> He even climbed Puresé (today called Puracé), the first of several volcanoes he would visit, and admired the "tremendous force" of the "sulphurous steam" that issued from cavities along its slope. At the nearby Rio Vinagre (Vinegar River), he made "lemonade" by adding sugar to the acidified waters.<sup>36</sup> Yet it was not until late August, as he and Field reached the Chota Valley in northern Ecuador, that Church the artist expressed his first epiphany: "A view of such unparalleled magnificence pre-



Fig. 8. Map of Colombia and Ecuador with Routes of Church's South American Trips, 1853 and 1857 (Adam Hart, Design Department, MMA)

sented itself that I must pronounce it one of the great wonders of Nature. I made a couple of feeble sketches this evening in recollection of the scene. My ideal of the Cordilleras is realised.”<sup>37</sup>

What had finally inspired such emotion from the young Yankee painter was apparently his first view of the peculiar double ridge of the Andes of Ecuador. Yet here, too, Church’s interest may have been cued by that of Humboldt, who had described the “extraordinary appearance” of the mountains from the Chota River, where he had passed half a century earlier. Humboldt had marveled at the range’s “symmetrical disposition in two lines from north to south,” separated not by “a longitudinal valley,” as previous observers had thought, but by a plateau suspended 9,000 feet above the sea, “a real ramification of the Cordilleras.”<sup>38</sup>

Church’s 1855 painting *The Andes of Ecuador* (fig. 9), the most ambitious and significant result of his 1853 expedition, seems to epitomize both Humboldt’s perception of the range and Church’s excited recognition of it. The painting also offers in some measure a preview of *The Heart of the Andes*. Its features distinctly resemble those in the series of drawings Church made on the road in southern Colombia and northern Ecuador in August 1853.<sup>39</sup> In *The Andes of Ecuador*, Church arranged the jagged mountain forms into two lines that seek convergence in a presumed vanishing point in the center of the picture but are dissolved by the haze of the rising or sinking sun. The plain between the ridges is a perfectly straight plateau. Tropical growth, denoted principally by a towering palm tree at left, adorns the valley floor; in the upper left and right, faintly



Fig. 9. Frederic Edwin Church, *The Andes of Ecuador*, 1855. Oil on canvas, 48 x 76 in. Reynolda House, Museum of American Art, Winston-Salem, N.C.



Fig. 10. John Martin, *The Plains of Heaven*, 1853. Oil on canvas, 78 x 120 in. Tate Gallery, London

visible snow-capped summits, one a mountain and the other a smoking volcano—perhaps Cotopaxi—connote at once the frigid zone of the equatorial world and the mountain-making inner forces of the planet. Several motifs endow Church's "ideal of the Cordilleras" with Christian import: the wayside cross, the worshipers, the palm tree representative of the "tree of life," and the distant church.<sup>40</sup> With the exception of the palm tree, they all reappear in *The Heart of the Andes*. Perhaps most significant, the vertical radiance of the sun intersects with the elevated plain at the earth's meridian to form a natural cross that embraces the whole scene. The idea for a central radiance of sunlight,

here defying the logic of a presumed view to the south, probably came from Church's second-hand knowledge of J.M.W. Turner's works. But in adopting it and exploiting the device of symmetry, Church showed that he could find ideal pictorial strategies and symbols to glorify the most representative natural environment on earth.

Yet what *The Andes of Ecuador* does not show suggests in part why Church was moved to return to South America four years later and revise his initial interpretation of Humboldt's ideas. Clever though the motif of the sun cross is and though its light conveys the hot climate of the Chota Valley, the lushness of the tropics is largely absent. The

foreground is too far from the viewer and the diffusion of the yellow light tends to dissolve the particularities of vegetation. And Chimborazo, the supposed zenith of the equatorial world and the measure by which Humboldt had illustrated the “geography of plants,” is not portrayed.

From the 1853 trip there are several sketchbooks, a few oil sketches, and a rather small number of larger drawings that frequently represent not direct observations of scenes but “recollections” or “compositions.” Most of the known sketchbook material represents hasty, broad work done chiefly from a boat moving up the Magdalena River.<sup>41</sup> By the end of May Church was already complaining in his letters home about how long travel was taking;<sup>42</sup> by late July Field had set a deadline of October 1 to start for home from Guayaquil;<sup>43</sup> still, the party only reached Quito by August 30. Practically the whole summer had been spent struggling through the jungle environments of Colombia when, as Church himself confided, he and Field “prefer[red] to devote what time we can to the grand mountains about Quito.”<sup>44</sup> But the erratic weather conditions and the distractions of the capital complicated their objectives. When Church climbed Pichincha, the volcano on whose eastern slope Quito is perched, he was enveloped in clouds, then pelted by hail.<sup>45</sup> Once, from Machachi, south of Quito, he had “fine and near views of several snowpeaks, including Cotopaxi,”<sup>46</sup> but thereafter clouds allowed only “a partial view” of the volcano that permitted “a slight sketch.”<sup>47</sup> Then it was quickly on to Riobamba, the capital of Chimborazo province, where the same conditions prevailed: a colored sketch begun of Chimborazo on September 17 was aborted by the onset of a thunderstorm.<sup>48</sup> Evidently anxious to reach the Pacific steamer in time, the party moved quickly on to Guayaquil, where they departed for New York on October 1. The artist arrived home with material sufficient to depict several Colombian and Ecuadorian snow peaks—principally the volcano Cotopaxi<sup>49</sup>—

but virtually nothing with which to portray Humboldt’s cherished Chimborazo.

With all he had achieved thus far, Church was still growing as an artist. His *Niagara* of 1857 (fig. 2), with its uncanny delineation of rushing water and miraculous rainbow, raised his standard of naturalism another notch above *The Andes of Ecuador*. The painting reflected not merely the artist’s technical improvement but the rising influence of the English aesthete John Ruskin and his exacting prescriptions for landscape representation. In volumes four and five of his *Modern Painters*, published in 1856, Ruskin dwelled minutely on the recommended treatment of the components of landscape—mountains, rocks, leaves, and clouds.<sup>50</sup> How well Church seems to have met, even exceeded, his requirements is conveyed by Ruskin’s response to *Niagara*, which was displayed in London in 1858. Ruskin said he had seen effects in it never before achieved in landscape painting, and the sight of the rainbow caused him to check the windowpanes in the gallery to ensure that no accident of light refraction was projecting the illusion on the canvas.<sup>51</sup>

Also critical for Church’s sharpening objectives was the expansion of the international art market. This included the growth of the phenomenon of the single-picture exhibition—of the so-called Great Picture—such as, from France, Rosa Bonheur’s *The Horse Fair* (1853; The Metropolitan Museum of Art) and, from England, John Martin’s monumental landscape triptych, *The Last Judgment* (1853; Tate Gallery, London). The creation and promotion of such machines reflected the growing desire of ambitious artists to escape the constraints and competition of academy exhibitions and to display their pictures independently, for an admission price.<sup>52</sup> The sale of engraved reproductions added to the profits from the exhibition, and the resulting publicity enhanced the likelihood of the artist’s attracting a generous buyer.

*The Last Judgment* series, in particular, seems a signifi-

cant factor in the creation of *The Heart of the Andes*, both iconographically and commercially.<sup>53</sup> The apocalyptic landscapes of Pandemonium Martin, as the British painter was nicknamed, made a bold impression on Church's teacher, Cole, and on Church himself early in his career.<sup>54</sup> *The Last Judgment* was Martin's last and most imposing project, comprising three ten-foot canvases with the cosmic vistas, vast architectural perspectives, and proportionately tiny figures that had always marked his style. The third picture in the series, *The Plains of Heaven* (fig. 10), though its subject is fantastic, anticipates the heady distances and tropical ambience of *The Heart of the Andes*. In London in 1854, and possibly in New York in 1856, *The Last Judgment* was dramatized by a darkened gallery setting relieved by light sources that illuminated only the paintings.<sup>55</sup> *Niagara* would

be shown in this fashion,<sup>56</sup> and *The Heart of the Andes* even more spectacularly, indirectly reflecting display techniques adapted from illusionistic landscape entertainment forms like panoramas and dioramas, the nineteenth-century forebears of the cinema.<sup>57</sup> Though Martin's pictures represented visionary rather than naturalistic landscape, in size, genre, promotion, and display they constituted the immediate stimulus for Church to attempt a South American composition on the scale of *The Heart of the Andes*.

### In the Heart of the Andes, 1857

To that end, Church's second journey to South America in 1857 picked up where he had left off four years before; he arrived in Guayaquil on May 23.<sup>58</sup> His companion this time



Fig. 11. Frederic Edwin Church, *Study of a Large-leaved Plant (Xanthosoma)*, June 1857. Graphite on buff paper, 4 3/4 x 7 1/8 in. Gift of Louis P. Church, 1917-4-226, Cooper-Hewitt, National Museum of Design, Smithsonian Institution / Art Resource, N.Y.



Fig. 12. Frederic Edwin Church, *A Sheet of Studies of Chimborazo*, June 1857. Oil over traces of graphite on thin paperboard, 11 1/2 x 17 1/2 in. Gift of Louis P. Church, 1917-4-825, Cooper-Hewitt, National Museum of Design, Smithsonian Institution / Art Resource, N.Y.

was the painter Louis Rémy Mignot, a Charleston, South Carolina, native of Huguenot descent. Following art study in Holland, Mignot had begun to attract attention in New York for his finely rendered landscapes.<sup>59</sup> While waiting for boats in both Panama and Guayaquil, Church began to make detailed annotated studies of palm trees, banana stalks, and other lowland plants (see fig. 11) in preparation for the foreground “torrid zone” of his projected Great Picture.<sup>60</sup> But these botanical studies were relatively incidental to his real objective: “Old Chimborazo, 150 miles distant, looms up like a white cloud in the East and makes

a noble landmark for our journey,” Church wrote to a friend from Guayaquil on May 27.<sup>61</sup> By June 3 he had ascended to Guaranda, a town about ten miles southwest of Chimborazo.

Lying in a rolling alpine valley irrigated by mountain mists and the little Chimbo river, Guaranda in obliging weather offers dramatic views of the mountain’s frozen summit. In 1853 Church had rushed through Guaranda on the way to Guayaquil, and the weather had probably been poor; this time he paused for ten days, taking advantage of at least several days of clear conditions. There and in the nearby village of Guanujo (spelled Guanajo by Church), he



produced at least four oil sketches of Chimborazo, about twenty pencil studies, and numerous sketchbook notes of the mountain, the surrounding hills, and features of the town.<sup>62</sup> Every one of the oil sketches is a startling revelation of the gleaming summit and, in some cases, of the erratic cloud conditions that alternately cloaked and unveiled it. One sheet (fig. 12) is divided into four separate views, only one of which fully reveals the crown. In the other views it barely peeks from behind gray garlands that, followed from one sketch to another, convey the languid, obscuring drift of the clouds that must have sometimes maddened the artist. The multiple-exposure photographic effect of the successive images is sure evidence of Church's absolute

dexterity in the oil medium by this time, as he pursued these transient effects presumably within an afternoon's sitting. Frustrating though the weather may have been, Church exploited its dramatic potential when he painted *The Heart of the Andes*, in which Chimborazo is represented only momentarily exposed by a parted fleet of clouds.

Church's purpose in Guaranda crystallized early in his stay there when he formulated, on June 5, a "composition with effect observed" (fig. 13). Beginning with a summary sketch of Chimborazo and Guaranda from the heights overlooking the southernmost part of the town,<sup>63</sup> Church combined features of a marvelous oil sketch (colorplate 5) done from the same location and several highly wrought



Fig. 13. Frederic Edwin Church, *Composition with Effect Observed*, Guaranda, June 5, 1857. Graphite on green-toned paper, 11 1/4 x 18 in. New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, N.Y.



Fig. 14. Rafael Salas, after José Cortes de Alcocer, *Alexander von Humboldt*, ca. 1857. Oil on canvas, 28 x 22 1/2 in. Dr. and Mrs. Peter Hans Stern, Rye, N. Y.

pencil drawings made in and around Guaranda on the same or in the preceding days. In the composition the Chimbo River appears in the right foreground, defining a diagonal groove through the hilly terrain toward the mountain. The oil sketch shows Chimborazo's incandescent dome lifted on a carpet of brushed fog, one of its tapers drawn upward to a day moon staring through the clouds. As was often the case, Church did not complete the painting to the bottom, but no matter: it was the "effect observed" that was of primary importance. For reasons of picturesque appeal, in the composition drawing Church virtually eliminated the huddle of squat dwellings, visible in many of the preparatory drawings, that constituted the town of Guaranda. In a procedure he had learned from Cole, Church carefully articulated the

colors and tones of the terrain and the atmospheric conditions in annotations inscribed at the base of the drawing, most keyed to numbers penciled over corresponding motifs. Thus: "Snow Peak dazzling creamy warm white, the base rock strongly developed . . . landscape generally greenish and greenish olive with luminous fields and outlines. . . . There was an exquisite contrast between the cool green blue of the sky, the moon and the low toned smoky warm clouds that surrounded them." The last remark savors faintly of a passage from a standard Victorian novel, indicating just how critical to the pictorial articulation of the landscape was its expression in words. Here and elsewhere, Church's descriptions are flavored with the vocabulary of the Sublime and Beautiful—"dazzling," "exquisite," "splendid," "magnificent," "lofty," "grand"—betraying his cultivation in Romantic literary-based aesthetics. These terms were also those of Humboldt in *Cosmos*.

The June 5 composition established the essential arrangement and motifs of *The Heart of the Andes*, but it is merely an idealized portrait of the view overlooking Guaranda, far from the compression of equatorial environments evident in the final painting. Church's conception expanded once he had departed Guaranda for Quito on June 14, traveling by mule northward on the Pan American road (the "Avenue of the Volcanoes") via Mocha, Ambato, Tacunga (now Latacunga), and Machachi, and reaching Quito about June 23. From the sketches preceding and following those made in Guaranda, it becomes evident that *The Heart of the Andes* does not merely fuse widely separated local environments but characterizes Church's expedition through them. Sketches of the elevated plain, scored with river ravines called *quebradas*, and of the massive rounded ridges bounding it, supplied the sources for the middle distance of the painting. Substituting those features for the undulating topography of Guaranda and the smaller, sharp ridges surrounding it in the June 5 composition changed the

supposed point of view. Although the aspect of Chimborazo's summit from the southwest was retained, the painting's ultimate design implies a view of the mountain from the northeast. The liberty taken should not have mattered, since the appearance of Chimborazo is similar from either direction.

At a distinctive corrugated ridge called Ruminahui, near Machachi, Church recorded another feature that was included in *The Heart of the Andes*, a faint "rainbow effect" crowning the highest pinnacle in the upper right corner.<sup>64</sup> However, it was in the vicinity of Quito that he found some of the motifs that would round off the composition. Following two days in the city proper sketching the surrounding mountains and volcanoes, Church and Mignot descended

to the Chillo Valley, twenty miles southeast of Quito, where they stayed at the country estate of the Aguirres, a noble family whose immediate forebear, the marquis de Selva Alegre, had hosted Humboldt for several months in 1802. The marquis's son, Carlos Montúfar, had accompanied Humboldt and Bonpland on the ascent of Chimborazo.<sup>65</sup> While there Church admired a portrait of the explorer, then just thirty-three, that the marquis had commissioned from Juan Cortés, a painter at Quito. Church in turn had another local painter, Rafael Salas, paint a copy (fig. 14), which ultimately hung at Church's home, Olana, in Hudson, New York.<sup>66</sup> From the Hacienda Chillo, as Church called the Aguirre estate, he had a comprehensive view of



Fig. 15. Frederic Edwin Church, *View of Pichincha Taken near the Hacienda Chillo*, June 26, 1857. Graphite on buff paper, 13 1/4 x 21 1/4 in. Gift of Louis P. Church, 1917-4-246, Cooper-Hewitt, National Museum of Design, Smithsonian Institution / Art Resource, N.Y.



Fig. 16. Frederic Edwin Church, *Waterfall near the Hacienda Chillo*, June 26, 1857. Graphite and white gouache on tan paper, 13 3/4 x 21 1/2 in. Gift of Louis P. Church, 1917-4-247, Cooper-Hewitt, National Museum of Design, Smithsonian Institution / Art Resource, N.Y.

Pichincha, the volcano on whose eastern flank Quito is perched. He made a pencil portrait of Pichincha (fig. 15) rising beyond a meandering river ravine that forecasts the configuration of the river and the cordillera in *The Heart of the Andes*. Further linking this drawing to the final appearance of the painting is a beautiful study done the same day, June 26, of a “waterfall near the Hacienda Chillo” (fig. 16), depicting a veil of water cascading into a natural amphitheater surrounded by cliffs and brushy hillocks. The study’s immediate chronological proximity to the Pichincha portrait—and the presumed geographical proximity of its setting—suggests the possibility that the features of both were combined in designing the central foreground of the painting. Yet Church did not simply transfer the features of the

Chillo waterfall to his painting; for that stately cataract, one suspects that Church resurrected in reduced scale features of his *Niagara*, finished just before he left on his second South American tour. The curtainlike fall in *The Heart of the Andes* is broader than those generally found in Ecuador, and the rapids closer to the viewer are virtual copies of those in *Niagara*.

Assuming that the two June 26 drawings are sources for the central foreground and middle distance of *The Heart of the Andes*, one is tempted to imagine further that the ultimate point of view selected for the painting was the one to the west from the hacienda of the Aguirres. It was an idealized view, since Chimborazo cannot be seen from that far north, but it was geographically accurate in that



Fig. 17. Frederic Edwin Church, *Study for "The Heart of the Andes,"* 1858. Oil on canvas, 10 1/4 x 18 1/4 in. New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, N.Y.

Chimborazo is located beyond the west ridge of the cordilleras to the south. The conceptual logic of the point of view is that it approximates what Humboldt would have both seen and foreseen from the Hacienda Chillo when he stayed there fifty-seven years earlier, anticipating his ascent of Chimborazo. Church had planned for Humboldt to see *The Heart of the Andes*; the picture was to have gone to Berlin with a letter expressing to Humboldt the artist's hope that he "would delight in seeing once more the country you traveled in 60 years ago."<sup>67</sup> Church's sentiments may well have had the most literal basis in the final design of his painting.

By July 2 or 3, when Church and Mignot were on the road back toward Guayaquil, most of the important fieldwork for *The Heart of the Andes* had been completed. Three more snow peaks were portrayed, the Illinizas on July 3 and

El Altar from Riobamba on July 13, and any one of these may have served for the icy pinnacle depicted to the right of Chimborazo in the painting. The big event of this phase of the trip was a four-day excursion southeast from Riobamba to the volcano Sangay, the account and sketches of which contributed to the 1862 painting *Cotopaxi* (see fig. 26).<sup>68</sup> By July 23, Church was again making pencil studies of plants—tree ferns, elephant ears, bocconia, bromeliads—in the cloud forests around San Jorjé, near Babahoyo, in what seems a final hurried sweep for foreground material. On July 24 he was at the Rio Guayas, en route to Guayaquil to pick up a steamer home.

Although he had been in South America just over two months (compared to five in 1853), Church returned to New York armed with fieldwork that would fuel his most ambitious tropical pictures in the next decade. The new

standard of description and scope was already visible in the painting *Cayambe* (1858; The New-York Historical Society, The Robert L. Stuart Collection), which was probably begun in the fall of 1857 and finished early in the new year. Painted on commission, the four-foot canvas portrays the Ecuadorean snow mountain that lies directly on the equator.<sup>69</sup> Its execution served as a dress rehearsal for the exacting performance Church would bring to his Great Picture. The foreground of *Cayambe* clearly indicates Church's use of the fresh botanical studies made in Panama, Guayaquil, and San Jorjé.<sup>70</sup>

*The Heart of the Andes* was begun by January 1858; the delay in beginning the picture probably occurred only because it was not until January or shortly before that Church, along with several colleagues, took up working

quarters in the new Studio Building at 15 West Tenth Street.<sup>71</sup> Completed just the previous year from the design of the young Richard Morris Hunt (later the architect of the central façade of the Metropolitan Museum), the Studio Building provided spacious, well-lit, and sorely needed studio and living quarters for New York artists.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, Hunt's intelligent plan for the building provided for an exhibition gallery, illuminated by skylights, in the central atrium. The gallery's first popular exhibition would be of *The Heart of the Andes* the following year. For the present, Church's new working environment accommodated his enlarged ambitions.

A small oil study (fig. 17) for *The Heart of the Andes*, completed in 1858, reveals how essentially set the picture had become in his mind shortly after Church's arrival back



Fig. 18. Frederic Edwin Church, *Tropical Lagoon*. Graphite and gouache on gray-toned paper, 8 1/4 x 15 in. New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, N.Y.

in New York: Chimborazo, the cordillera, the cloud flotillas, the elevated plain, the river ravine, the church, the waterfall. The only significant changes reflected in the transition from the study to the painting are the chief features of the immediate foreground. Clearly, Church first thought of reprising the kind of lowland jungle foreground familiar from his earlier South American pictures. An undated composition drawing (fig. 18), reflecting motifs observed along either the Magdalena River in 1853 or the Rio Guayas in 1857, appears to rehearse the arrangement of palm trees rising above a river bend or lagoon in the oil study.<sup>73</sup> Incorporated into any composition with Andean snow peaks in the background, such a setting illustrated the torrid zone of the equatorial world. But for the finished painting Church decided this scheme would not serve. As extravagant as the foliage is in the temperate and subtropical habitats located between the double ridge of the Andes of Ecuador, palm trees do not grow naturally and the riverbanks are steeper and more rugged than those in the jungle. In the finished painting the palm trees have given way to massive deciduous trees of uncertain identity, perhaps of the birch or oak family.<sup>74</sup> For these, Church made a special large-scale study in pencil (fig. 19), probably amplified from an unknown field sketch. These forest monarchs set off more boldly than the palms the successive spatial planes of the waterfall and the cordillera beyond them. A particularly effective accent of spatial definition is the dramatic gnarled root silhouetted against the far bank. In scooping out the ground beneath the trees and boldly defining the steep riverbank in the left foreground, the artist not only revised the foreground terrain more in accordance with the Hacienda Chillo drawings of June 26, but contrived a figurative linear perspective that converges behind the cascade. As the perspective widens toward the viewer the river also seems to fall beneath him, toward the lowlands. Where the riverbanks meet, the lines cross and



Fig. 19. Frederic Edwin Church, *Large Deciduous Trees*. Graphite and gouache on paper, 14 1/4 x 17 3/4 in. New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, N.Y.

are extended into the upper corners of the picture by means of the treetops on the right and the mountainous “steps,” marked by cloud shadows, ascending to the summit of Chimborazo on the left. The resulting X pattern—a terrestrial descendant of the sun cross in *The Andes of Ecuador*—serves to fuse the picture’s disparate components. Church further strengthened the composition in the left foreground with the highlighted tree trunk that bears his signature.

The final labor—the most obsessive and time-consuming—must have been the articulation of the flora and fauna in the foreground. In Humboldt’s eyes, had he been able to see the picture as Church had intended, the artist might well have earned immense credit. Even modern botanists are impressed, considering that most tropical New World species had escaped identification in Church’s century despite Humboldt’s and Bonpland’s tireless collecting. Even in today’s trammled paradise, new species are found almost daily. If Church himself seems only occasionally to have known what kinds of plants he was sketching, he portrayed them with affection and enough accuracy that



one can venture to apply at least family names to the most prominent. Besides tree ferns, bromeliads, orchids, and passionflowers, one can identify morning glories, philodendra, daisy shrubs, bocconia, codonanthe and columnea vines, elephant ears (anthurium and xanthosoma; see also fig. 11), and cortaderia grass.<sup>75</sup> Church's zoological fidelity was less strict. The most prominent bird in the painting, the Resplendent Quetzal by the path at lower left, is Central American and was probably observed in Panama. The black birds, one perched and one aloft, near the riverbank at right are Red-ruffed Fruitcrows and though Ecuadorean are generally not known above the lowland forests. However, the hanging nests of oropendolas and the large butterflies probably of the pierid family are characteristic.<sup>76</sup> Despite the liberties taken, it is fair to say that, in the foreground, Church denoted with unprecedented specificity the temperate habitat of the Andean corridor of Ecuador while suggesting the dense floral and faunal variety of the rain forest at sea level. Further, in crowning the jungle and plain ecosystems with Chimborazo for the first time, Church reflected in artistic terms Humboldt's geography of plants and evoked for the naturalist's readers his legendary climb (see fig. 6).

That Church could rely on Humboldt's international reputation to enhance the appeal of his painting is proven by the publicity that attended the artist's labors on his South American pictures in 1858–59. Especially indicative, and surprising, is a notice that appeared in the March 1858 issue of *The Crayon*—a short-lived art journal favoring the philosophy of Ruskin—in connection with Church's completion of *Cayambe*. Using Church as his authority, the writer sought to contradict a recent report that “an Englishman and a Frenchman . . . had reached the summit of [Chimborazo].” Church had claimed to have seen these adventurers in Ecuador, and he had asserted that “they made no effort to travel up the sides of the

mountain except with their eyes.” The writer then concluded, “Humboldt reached the highest point yet attained by any traveler.”<sup>77</sup> The assertion was ignorant. Although Chimborazo's summit would not be conquered until 1880, it was no secret, particularly to Humboldt, that in 1831 a Frenchman climbed several hundred feet higher than he had.<sup>78</sup> What is important, however, is that the comment by the *Crayon* writer may have reflected a widely held, if mistaken, belief that Humboldt still held the altitude record in the New World.

If the scientific quest in *The Heart of the Andes* is only implicit in its geological and botanical description, the Christian import with which those suggestions are adorned is as readily apparent as it was in *The Andes of Ecuador*. The trail into the picture leads directly to the cross; the river below leads to the church, which is located just beneath the first mountain terraces rising to the summit of Chimborazo. To be sure, Catholicism in Spanish America was long established by the nineteenth century, and country churches and memorial or pilgrimage crosses—ubiquitous in Church's other equatorial pictures—are familiar features of Ecuador's landscape. But the lineage of such motifs can be traced back to his North American paintings as well,<sup>79</sup> and before them to Cole's religious allegories, notably *The Voyage of Life* (see fig. 3) and the *The Cross and the World* (whereabouts unknown).<sup>80</sup> In both those series landscape embodies the difficult journey to Christian reward, a concept informed by the seventeenth-century John Bunyan's Protestant allegory *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which was enjoying a revival in the English-speaking world.<sup>81</sup> Given his own religious and artistic origins, it is safe to say that Church transforms the subject of the Christian pilgrimage into a theme of *The Heart of the Andes*, where it is equated with the scientific quest. The interpretation is strengthened by the opposing perception of Humboldt's explorations by his American admirers. The critic Henry Tuckerman, for example, termed





Fig. 20. Photographer unknown (possibly J. Gurney & Son, New York), *The Heart of the Andes* in its original frame, on exhibition at the Metropolitan Fair in aid of the Sanitary Commission, New York, April 1864. Stereograph. The New-York Historical Society, New York



Plate I. (above) *The Heart of the Andes* (detail of center)

Plate II. (below) *The Heart of the Andes* (detail of lower left)



Plate III. Frederic Edwin Church, *The Heart of the Andes*, 1859. Oil on canvas, 66 1/8 x 119 1/4 in. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of M.





Margaret E. Döws, 1909 (09.95)



Plate IV. (above) *The Heart of the Andes* (detail of lower right)

Plate V. (below) Frederic Edwin Church, *Chimborazo Seen Through Rising Mists and Clouds*, June 1857. Oil over traces of graphite on thin paperboard, 13 1/2 x 21 1/8 in. Gift of Louis P. Church, 1917-4-824. Courtesy Cooper-Hewitt, National Museum of Design, Smithsonian Institution / Art Resource, N.Y.

Humboldt's travels "a pilgrimage" evincing "the progress of humanity."<sup>82</sup> Despite Humboldt's firm agnosticism, one of his American eulogists in 1859 refused to let the scientist rest in his grave without hoping that he had found a "serene home within the everlasting mountains."<sup>83</sup>

Surely Church's painting came to be interpreted in religious as well as in scientific terms. Not surprisingly, clerics were especially fond of eliciting a moral from it. One of them, extolling *The Heart of the Andes* as "a picture for young men," characterized it in a series of images informed by the poetry of Longfellow, evoking Cole's and Martin's paintings (see figs. 3, 10) and alluding to *The Pilgrim's Progress*:

[*The Heart of the Andes*] is luxuriant in rapid growths. It has a glassy river flowing on under o'er-arching verdure until it plunges over a precipice—an allegory of the sensualist's career. To gaze up into those mountain heights is like reading Longfellow's "Excelsior," an inspiration to do and dare great achievements. There is a flashing peak of alabaster brightness in the far-away distance, which recalls the Apocalyptic visions of heaven. Let the aspiring youth who gazes at this matchless picture bear in mind that it is only he who spurns the seductive waves of temptation, and bravely masters the "Hills of Difficulty" for Christ's sake, that shall make good his entrance to the golden glories of the New Jerusalem.<sup>84</sup>

### *The Heart of the Andes* Exhibited

As the painting neared completion, elaborate preparations were being undertaken for its introduction to the New York public. Church now looked to John McClure, a Scottish-born former agent of the publisher Williams, Stevens, and Williams, to manage its promotion, exhibition, and repro-



Fig. 21. Artist unknown, *The Tenth Street Studio Building*, ca. 1865. Engraving from T. B. Aldrich, "Among the Studios," *Our Young Folks*, vol. I (September 1865). General Research Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations, New York

duction.<sup>85</sup> Church probably met McClure about the time of the New York premiere of *Niagara*, which had taken place in the galleries of Williams, Stevens, and Williams on Broadway. A contract between the artist and agent was not

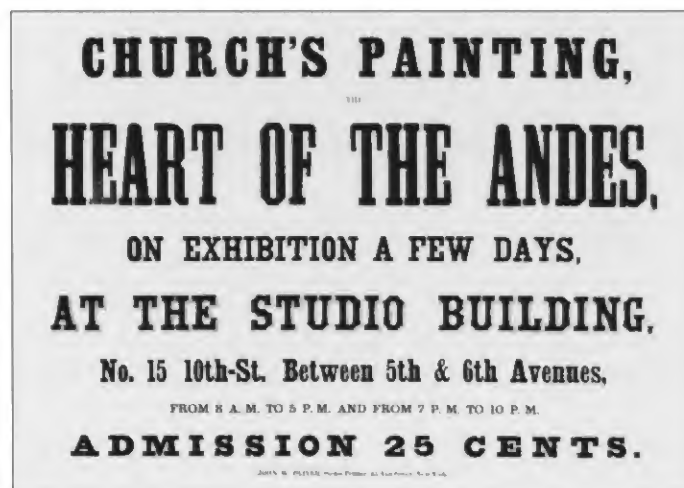


Fig. 22. Poster advertisement of original exhibition of *The Heart of the Andes* at the Studio building, Tenth Street, New York, 1859. New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, N.Y.



drawn up until May 14, 1859, two weeks into the exhibition, but as early as mid-April McClure had been named to “have charge of the picture.”<sup>86</sup> The written agreement gave McClure the right to exhibit the painting for two years and obliged him to insure it for \$10,000, to have it reproduced as a steel engraving in England “in the highest style of art,” and to pay Church half the net proceeds from the exhibition admissions and from the sales of the print.<sup>87</sup> The insurance value of the painting certainly suggests the premium Church was placing on this venture, but it was scarcely pie-eyed. By May 14 Church had already sold the painting for that sum to New York manufacturer and rising art patron William T. Blodgett. It was the highest price yet to be paid for an American landscape painting; nevertheless, the agreement between the artist and his patron stipulated that Blodgett must wait out the two-year exhibition period to receive the picture and must forgo it if Church received an offer at least twice as high from an American citizen during that time.<sup>88</sup> He did not, but his share of the tour and engraving profits was hardly cause for chagrin.

Perhaps it was McClure, with his presumed experience in displaying British blockbuster paintings, who also helped the artist devise and arrange for the extraordinary first setting for *The Heart of the Andes*. An English decorator identified only as Mr. Whitlaw was commissioned to build from Church’s design an enormous black walnut frame (fig. 20). At first glance, the frame evokes a stage proscenium;<sup>89</sup> the artist’s intention was to create the impression of a window casement of Renaissance-Revival style through which the viewer would peer into the picture as though it were a real, not a painted, landscape. For many observers, it succeeded in this conceit for several reasons. The frame was so large—about thirteen feet high by fourteen feet wide—that the painting seemed not so much surrounded by as set into it. The massive structure could hardly hang from

a wall but stood on the floor, so that its base resembled a molding, which rose to a perfectly flat sill in front of the picture. That the frame was freestanding also ensured that the presumed horizon line of the picture, about midway from top to bottom, remained fixed at a height at the eye level of an average-size adult. The frame’s elaborately carved features included a cornice with an escutcheon, a window pole hung with green tasseled swags, attached colonnettes tapering to finials at the sides, and a deep beveled embrasure above and at the sides of the picture with panel lines that roughly aligned with its X perspective design. As counterpoint to its rich carving, the frame’s dark color was intended to let the naturalism of the painting

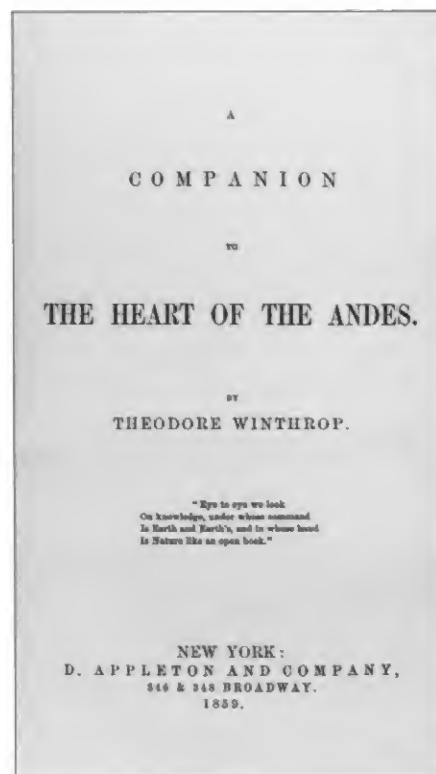


Fig. 23. Title page from Theodore Winthrop, *A Companion to The Heart of the Andes*, New York, 1859. New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, N.Y.

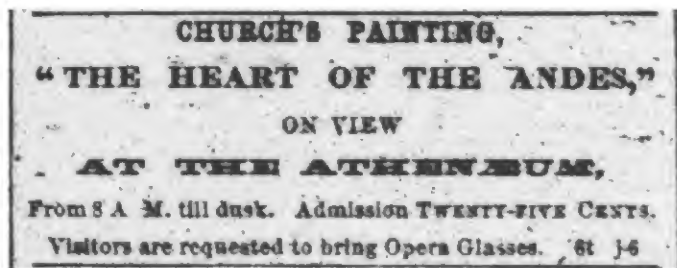


Fig. 24. Advertisement for exhibition of *The Heart of the Andes* at the Boston Athenaeum, *Boston Daily Evening Transcript*, January, 1860. General Research Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations, New York

speak for itself, free of the glaring competition of gilding that had been the preferred finish for frames since the Middle Ages.

It may have been no accident that the architecture of the frame accorded with the style of the Studio Building (fig. 21), where, except for the opening private view on April 27, 1859, the original showing took place.<sup>90</sup> In the large Exhibition Room where *The Heart of the Andes* was set up, the displayers managed to reproduce the lighting effects created at single-picture exhibitions in London. They either painted the walls dark or screened them with dark fabric. Probably, too, they masked the skylight in the gallery in such a way that, though it could not be seen by spectators, its illumination was directed primarily at the painting. This would have made the painting the apparent source of light, increasing its illusionistic power like the panoramas and dioramas of its time and anticipating the illusionism of movie images today. In addition, visitors were advised through notices and advertisements to bring along opera glasses (fig. 24), so that they could focus on individual settings and details within the painting, abandoning the frame altogether and imaginatively pursuing the trail marked by the artist into the equatorial wilderness.<sup>91</sup>

Meanwhile, friends of the artist who had seen the picture in his studio composed programs for *The Heart of the Andes* that could be bought at the door (see fig. 23). The two

published for the opening are a measure of the literalism and literariness of the painting itself. The booklets made fairly clear that *The Heart of the Andes* was a condensation of that ideal of nature, the microcosm of the planet, that the equatorial Andes had represented to Humboldt. The longer text of the two, by Theodore Winthrop, accordingly divided the image into ten regions, among them “The Sky,” “The Snow Dome,” and “The Road and Left Foreground,” which seem to be the aesthete’s equivalent of Humboldt’s division of climatic zones in the Andes.<sup>92</sup> Each of these precincts was subjected—sometimes more than once—to Winthrop’s ornate prose; the number of pages was no fewer than forty-three. The other booklet, about half as long, was penned by the Reverend Louis Legrand Noble, the earliest biographer of Thomas Cole and the companion of Church on his next exploration, toward the Arctic circle.<sup>93</sup> Like Winthrop, Noble parsed *The Heart of the Andes* at length, but with a more cogent awareness of Humboldt’s scheme of the Ecuadorean environment as earth’s creation on display. Only the artist, he contended, who understood the principles of terrestrial formation could re-create landscape on canvas.<sup>94</sup> The contemporary ideal of that artist was Church.

What appeal the two booklets had lay chiefly in their function as travel guides. With Winthrop, the spectator “passed first up the misty glen . . . under the purple precipices . . . beheld the Dome [Chimborazo] and approached it reverently . . . [and] climbed its three terraces.” One was beckoned still further to “enter this delightful pleasaunce” of the left foreground glade, and to “wander on into ambrosial darkness.”<sup>95</sup> Noble conducted the viewer more purposefully along the trail plotted by Church from the foreground to the background, as this passage illustrates:

Imagine yourself, late in the afternoon with the sun behind you, to be travelling up the valley along the



bank of a river, at an elevation above the hot country of some five or six thousand feet. At the point to which you have ascended, heavily-wooded mountains close in on either hand (not visible in the picture—only the foot of each jutting into view), richly clothed with trees and all the appendage of the forest, with the river flowing between them. . . . Conspicuous on the opposite side of the river is the road leading into the country above, a wild bridle-path in the brightest sunshine, winding up to, and losing itself in the thick, shady woods. . . .

Passing forward, the eye sweeps the capacious vale, and strikes the mountains where they mingle in the airy distance. Those, or rather *that*, on the right—a multitude of smaller mountains on the breast of a greater, piled one above another . . . and builded into one mighty mass, a very world—ascends into the gray and warmly-tinted clouds; . . . [the mountains] on the left, stretch far into the east, rising into bright skies in a succession of snowy ridges, pinnacles and domes . . . all culminating in one imperial height, helmeted with the crystal of eternal winter.<sup>96</sup>

Church and McClure must have expected, or hoped, that *The Heart of the Andes* would have its debut in the Exhibition Room of the new Studio Building, but perhaps sensitivity to the feelings of the artist's co-tenants there dictated discretion in the selection of the first venue—Lyric Hall on Broadway, where the private view took place on April 27. With the horde of invitations he sent out, McClure insured that the affair was a brilliant one socially: some five hundred friends and associates, including the entire membership of a city club, showed up, creating such a mob in the incommensurable chamber that, in the words of a *New York Times* reporter, “those who could succeed at rare intervals in seeing *something*, could never be quite sure of

what it was they saw.”<sup>97</sup> But the problem was not just the crowd. Lyric Hall had few or no natural light sources, so that the picture was made to suffer “torture by gaslight,”<sup>98</sup> batteries of burners equivalent to fifteen-watt light bulbs. These had to be kept far enough from the painting so as not to burn it but, from a safe distance, lent it only a sickly yellow cast. To judge from later lobbying by Church's agents with newspaper editors in other cities, it was probably no accident that the *Times* responded to the shortcomings of Lyric Hall by urging the accommodation of the Studio Building's gallery for the remainder of the exhibition. The *Times* concluded, “The objection that this building lies off the regular Broadway route of business and pleasure can hardly apply in such a case as this, for wherever such a picture as the ‘Heart of the Andes’ is to be found, there Broadway, business and pleasure will rapidly follow.”<sup>99</sup>

And they did, again partly thanks to McClure's shrewd notices, which promised the picture for only “a short time previous to being taken to Europe.”<sup>100</sup> By the ninth of May, reported the *Commercial Advertiser*, the Studio Building had been visited by unspecified “thousands.”<sup>101</sup> Over the next three weeks, until May 22 (not counting Sundays when the gallery was closed), attendance averaged over five hundred people a day, but the numbers swelled toward May 23, the last day of the exhibition, on which more than two thousand visitors milled past the picture.<sup>102</sup> Many stood for hours in a line said to have stretched from Sixth Avenue to Broadway;<sup>103</sup> others never got through the door. Settees were removed to make additional standing space in a gallery just thirty by forty feet. By closing time, lingerers watched in dismay as Church and his helpers took the painting out of the frame and bore it from the room.<sup>104</sup> Already he was enriched: at a quarter per person for admission the artist had grossed nearly \$3,200 and had reportedly collected \$6,000 in subscriptions for the engraving.<sup>105</sup>

New York's disappointment at the closing of the first

exhibition was doubled because it marked the end of one of the great social events of the the 1858–59 season. Even if the visitor could complain of not seeing the picture for the crowd, he or she would have been gratified at the sight of many of the faces to be recognized in it at one time or another. Of course all of the major artists then in town showed up, undoubtedly mixing envy with a wish to bask vicariously in the glow of their lionized colleague's achievement. Literati young and old made their appearance: the humorist T. G. Appleton, *Harper's Monthly's* future editor George W. Curtis, and the poet John Whittier.<sup>106</sup> On the very last day, the horde surrounding the painting parted into a solemn aisle through which the venerable old Washington Irving was ushered before the painting. "Pronounced it glorious—magnificent!" his nephew recalled.<sup>107</sup> Attending statesmen included former President Martin Van Buren and scholar-ambassador Edward Everett. The chess prodigy Paul Morphy paid his due to his counterpart in art.<sup>108</sup> But no visitor to the Exhibition Room during those weeks could have been more socially rewarded than the host. It was there, so the story goes, that Church met his future wife, Isabel Carnes. Chaperoned by her mother, she eyed the picture admiringly, unaware that the artist, standing behind one of its draperies, was staring appreciatively back at her.<sup>109</sup> Introductions followed. The following year Isabel and Frederic began their married life together in a cottage on a hill in Hudson, New York, overlooking the Hudson River Valley and the Catskill Mountains. There Church later built his exotic mansion, Olana, the permanent home for him, Isabel, and their four surviving children. The huge property dominated by the house, which can still be visited today, was purchased partly with profits from *The Heart of the Andes*.

Church's Great Picture was not hailed unanimously, even by New York's critics. But in a blossoming culture where "magic" illusion readily seduced, where rave reviews

were often written by the exhibitors themselves, and where the odor of humbug—or mere showmanship—tended to help rather than hinder the entrepreneur, Church's painting was the hit of a generation. "Humboldt has given us the word-painting of the magnificent scene of this picture," wrote West Point artist Robert Walter Weir in a letter published in the *New York Post*, "and now comes the true magician, with his harp of a thousand strings, to present the subtle tones that no words can describe."<sup>110</sup> The *Times* distinguished that the painting "was not like the 'Niagara' a simply magnificent mirror of one scene and one moment in Nature, but like the noblest works of CLAUDE and TURNER, a grand pictorial poem."<sup>111</sup> Not content with the paragons of recent landscape art, *The Spirit of the Times* reached back to the classical age for comparison: "Apelles robbed a multitude of Athenian beauties to form his Venus; so has Mr. Church brought the charms of a vast world and concentrated them in a single canvass."<sup>112</sup> Even the exemplars of literature were conscripted to raise Church into the circle of immortals. *Cosmopolitan Art Journal* found that, "like the full and perfectly balanced mind of Milton, or Macaulay, or Carlyle, Mr. Church has approached his work, and given in one grand expression, the power, and depth, and greatness, and beauty of a most glorious subject."<sup>113</sup>

The majority of critics who favored the picture praised it as an extraordinary harmonizing of design and detail. *Harper's Weekly* went so far as to say that "Mr. Church seems to have bridged the gulf between the exactitude of the pre-Raphaelites and the breadth of the post-Raphaelites," invoking the modern English painter John Everett Millais and the seventeenth-century Italian Salvator Rosa to define those poles of representation.<sup>114</sup> But for the minority who looked askance at *The Heart of the Andes*, the artist had stumbled in that very aim. The Ruskinian journal, *The Crayon*, ironically found itself faulting the picture for lacking "unity and repose" precisely because "every square inch of

the canvas [is] covered with nature's statistics"<sup>115</sup>—that is, in accordance with the philosophy of Ruskin, who preached painstaking imitation of nature. The critic of *The Century* feared that “Mr. Church is in danger from his facility of characterization and expression. He paints objects so well that he is tempted to make a picture by a combination of objects. His delicate touch, his easy command of all detail, his clear and accurate perception, prevails in many cases over his ideal feeling.”<sup>116</sup> Even the observer who admired its detail felt obliged to defend Church against the murmurings of “trick” by younger painters attending the exhibition: “Let them be certain that to mention trick with regard to any really great painting is to pay it a high compliment. It argues that something in effect or handling has been produced which

they do not understand or which they have not the power to accomplish.”<sup>117</sup>

The truth of the matter was that Church had exacerbated the doubts of connoisseurs with his novel frame and its openly illusionistic conceit. Some would accord the artist credit for rejecting the obligatory gilded frame and allowing the tones, colors, and atmospheric perspective of the painting to speak for themselves.<sup>118</sup> But few would congratulate him on the frame's design and function. Conceding the effectiveness of the frame's “artificial perspective” and admiring it as “a piece of furniture,” the critic of *The Albion* sternly qualified:

As an accessory to Mr. Church's picture, it is Barnumesque and altogether objectionable. . . . The



Fig. 25. William Forrest, after Frederic Church, *The Heart of the Andes*, 1862. Engraving, 21 7/8 x 32 3/8 in. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Gift of William H. Huntington, by exchange, 1979 (1979.535.1)

ideal, we say, is perfect; mix up the real with it, and you spoil the whole. We hope then that this is the first and last innovation of this sort, and that Mr. Church will not subject himself to the charge of resorting to a showman's device. . . . Artifice does not fraternize with Art.<sup>119</sup>

The *Post* echoed the *Albion*'s charges and was more specific in associating the frame with the sort of showmanship exercised by panorama exhibitors, who promoted their pictures as surrogate experience.<sup>120</sup> Church himself, however, was probably not bothered by the apparent conflict. The kind of popular exposition of natural history he and some panoramists were engaged in was almost precisely what had been prescribed in *Cosmos* by Humboldt, who termed panoramas "improvements in landscape painting on a large scale," and urged artists to paint panoramic pictures of tropical subjects for exhibition in northern cities.<sup>121</sup> There was no sin in being popular if one's aim was ostensibly to educate through entertainment.

## The Reception in London

The foreign tour of *The Heart of the Andes* was to have included several stops on the Continent on the way to Berlin, where Church and McClure intended Humboldt to see it.<sup>122</sup> As it was, the painting traveled no farther than Great Britain. Bayard Taylor, who had met Humboldt, was enlisted to write to say that the painting was being sent to Berlin expressly for his pleasure and to convey the artist's sentiment that Humboldt had blazed the trail of his successful career.<sup>123</sup> The letter was never sent. Humboldt had died on May 6, ten days before it was written. When Church heard the news, he said that it "touched me as if I had lost a friend," and the plans for the Continental tour evaporated.<sup>124</sup>

There was little more than a five-week lapse between

the closing in New York and the opening in London at the German Gallery on Bond Street on July 4, 1859. To be sure, there was a stronger modicum of judicious doubt about *The Heart of the Andes* among the sophisticates of London than among Church's compatriots, but the surprise is how extravagant—even if heard at wider intervals—were the plaudits, issuing from some of the most authoritative print sources of the day. W. P. Bayley of *Art-Journal*, who later personally transmitted his adulation to Church,<sup>125</sup> echoed comparisons drawn by American critics between Church and Turner and the Pre-Raphaelites. Then he exceeded their claims: "On this American more than on any other . . . does the mantle of [Turner] our greatest painter appear to us to have fallen. Westward the sun of Art seems rolling." According to Bayley, "One of our most distinguished landscape painters [probably Clarkson Stanfield] attended the exhibition and exclaimed, 'A wonderful picture! A wonderful picture! The man must be a great genius.'"<sup>126</sup> So great, thought another observer, that "Turner himself, in wildest imagination, never painted a scene of greater magnificence than this view."<sup>127</sup> On the opposite end of the scale, *Saturday Review* dismissed the painting as a mere panorama; the critic would have preferred "a blurred sketch of Welsh hills, by David Cox [for] more of the true elements of grandeur than Mr. Church's ten feet of panoramic view of some of the highest mountains in the world."<sup>128</sup> But even those who found that *The Heart of the Andes* possessed "more of manipulation than genius about it," who advised the artist to "take the leap from the land of prose to the realms of poetry," conceded that its features were "so finely and artistically managed that, of its kind, the picture is one of the most interesting in existence."<sup>129</sup> For the British, Church's picture really was something new in its joining of large size and minute detail, to some observers new to the point of blinding them to its debt to artistic tradition. "It seems to have been very little 'composed,' or 'treated,'"

found the critic of *The Atlas*. “Indeed, one of the most gratifying sensations conveyed by the picture is the conviction that it is not the work of a man wishing to be orthodox at any sacrifice.”<sup>130</sup> *Saturday Review* deemed *The Heart of the Andes* “a fine specimen of this rising [American] school which has taught itself,”<sup>131</sup> while *Literary Gazette* went to some lengths to distinguish the picture as “the work of a painter unacquainted with European studies and academic traditions.”<sup>132</sup> As it had for previous American art exhibited in the mother country, such condescension only benefited Church’s enterprise.

But exhibition was not the only or even the primary intent of having sent the painting to Britain. It was there that the “highest style” of reproduction could be guaranteed. McClure had contracted with a reputable Scottish engraver, William Forrest, to cut the steel plate from which black-and-white prints (fig. 25) would be made. Forrest would, of course, study the original painting at length during July of 1859 and even had it shipped back to him from America for a brief period in the summer of 1860 for his exclusive reference, as he struggled with the subtleties of the sky in the engraving.<sup>133</sup> Otherwise, lacking the original, he relied on photographs taken of it in London and, principally, on an exacting cabinet-size watercolor replica of *The Heart of the Andes* (National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.), now believed to have been painted by a professional British copyist.<sup>134</sup> It was fortunate that Church’s contract with William Blodgett for the purchase of the painting provided for a long exhibition tour prior to being turned over to the owner. The complexities of the project and the trade disruptions that occurred between the United States and Great Britain during the Civil War prevented Forrest from completing the engraving for two years. During that time, *The Heart of the Andes* toured itself into the favor of Americans throughout the country east of the Mississippi. Shortly thereafter, Forrest presented a

reproduction that vindicated the long wait of its many subscribers.

## The American Tour

The American tour of *The Heart of the Andes*, with stops in Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Cincinnati, Chicago, St. Louis, and Brooklyn, began with a repeat presentation at the Studio Building for three months in the fall of 1859. That the gate receipts for the second, much longer, showing in New York did not equal those for the three-week premiere in the spring was of little consequence. Church’s landscape painting of the New World had already so stimulated the cultural climate in America, had inspired so many painters and sculptors to attempt more ambitious projects, and had instilled such pride in national accomplishment in the arts that it was credited with inaugurating a “new art epoch” in American history.<sup>135</sup> To be sure, there was a great deal of simultaneous exhibition activity in New York and elsewhere, at least some of which emerged in response to *The Heart of the Andes*. At the Düsseldorf Gallery, William Page’s *Venus* (location unknown) was either edifying or titillating the masses, depending upon whom one consulted about the event.<sup>136</sup> Church’s sculptor friend Erastus Dow Palmer had his marble *White Captive* (1859; Metropolitan Museum of Art), a Victorian idol of supple chastity, on view at William Schaus’s Broadway gallery. At the National Academy of Design was a large historical tableau, *Home of Washington After the War* (1859; Metropolitan Museum of Art), by Church’s colleagues Mignot and Thomas Rossiter, and, following *Venus* at the Düsseldorf Gallery, *The Dream of Italy*, an ambitious ideal landscape by William Sonntag.<sup>137</sup> As titles like Sonntag’s and those assigned by other landscape painters to their works for years thereafter would suggest—e.g., *The Queen of the Antilles*, *The Crown of New England*, *The Domes of the Yo-*

*Semite*—the links to Church’s painting transcended genre and size.

If the local newspapers can be believed, the response to the painting in Boston bordered on the phenomenal. In six weeks, mid-December to early February, the exhibition drew over 30,000 people,<sup>138</sup> well over twice the number for the first New York showing. In the words of one editor, the attendance represented “the largest number of our citizens and suburban neighbors who have ever crowded to see a single work of art.”<sup>139</sup> And this was with only daytime hours of exhibition. The attendance may well have been helped by the simultaneous exhibition of *Niagara* at another gallery in the city. The Boston editors sounded a theme that was to be stressed throughout the American circuit, the genius of the painting’s illusion, admired not merely in itself but as an attribute of artistic modesty: “Mr. Church has attained that rare perfection which enables him to show only the *scene*, and not *himself*. ‘Ars est celare artem.’ As you look upon this picture, it does not occur to you that it is only a painting; it is a reality.”<sup>140</sup> Another correspondent defended the picture against the now familiar charges of excessive detail by associating its style with that of the novels of Charles Dickens, criticized on similar grounds:

It is said that Church paints as Dickens writes—*by the inch*, and without much plot; that sketching his picture slightly, he begins at any corner and works on, finishing as he proceeds. No matter how . . . Such genius and patience . . . I have doubts now, whether it was ever painted; whether I have not been dreaming an actual landscape.<sup>141</sup>

The identification of Church’s method with Dickens’s may now seem strained, but such notices cultivated a certain cachet for the painting, one that had often enough originated with the artist’s agents. Their letters to Church while the painting was on tour indicate that they frequently

composed the reviews (or “puffs”), a practice typical in nineteenth-century America. From Philadelphia, where *The Heart of the Andes* opened at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in March 1860, McClure’s assistant, Richard T. Miller, let the artist know that he could expect four notices from the local press, and added: “I had to write them all, and the effect has been good. Our receipts yesterday were \$90.88, and today will be equal to that. . . . After hard work I have got the people & press fairly worked up & we shall undoubtedly have a fine run until 1st April.”<sup>142</sup>

Tailoring the exhibition to the exigencies of each venue was, however, labor intensive. Safe shipment between cities—of exhibition apparatus as well as of the painting—was always troublesome. The frame was designed to disassemble into portable units, not all of which reached the successive destinations at the same time. For McClure, worrying that the frame would simply not show up was heightened by fears for its condition: “I wish the frame was made of any other wood than walnut,” complained the agent, “it warps more than ever in some places.”<sup>143</sup> On the other hand, the frame’s component construction sometimes accommodated the limitations of certain venues. McClure reported to Church that “in fitting up the frame” in the low, narrow hall that was rented on Lake Street, Chicago, “I had to dispense with the carved work—the cornice touching the ceiling.” To light the picture for nighttime exhibitions, the resourceful agent fixed gas lamps to the floor like footlights.<sup>144</sup> Occasionally, the strategy of screening the walls included whatever other paintings might have been on them already, as at the gallery of the Historical Society in Baltimore in April 1860.<sup>145</sup> Still elsewhere, the limitations in natural lighting called for applying a few coats of whitewash to the ceiling, which would be left uncovered to reflect as much light as possible on the picture.<sup>146</sup>

At most stops, the effect of such efforts was salutary. But not everywhere. Rainy weather in Baltimore dampened the

success of the exhibition there.<sup>147</sup> There were also, according to McClure, provincial and political factors as one moved southward. Advising Church against sending *The Heart of the Andes* to Washington, D.C., after the weak reception in Baltimore, McClure snapped, “The north is the country for art—it is the hardest thing in the world to excite enthusiasm in regard to art matters in the Southern mind. . . . Art will have a poor chance [in Washington] so long as the nigger engrosses the undivided attention of Congress.”<sup>148</sup> Accordingly, the picture went no farther than Baltimore. It spent the summer at the engraver’s studio in Edinburgh.

With the increasing lapse of time since the *The Heart of the Andes* had been introduced to the American public,

with the growing threat of civil war, and amid the raw culture of frontier society, the exhibition fared less well in the West. Despite the promising venues McClure was able to book in Cincinnati (where the picture was displayed at Pike’s Opera House) and Chicago, the press in both cities aired similar laments. In Cincinnati an editor plaintively inquired, “Why is it that panoramas and mere daubs, are run after, while this most exquisite reproduction of nature upon canvass is neglected?”<sup>149</sup> In Chicago the picture may have had as many as four thousand visitors in five weeks in the dead of winter, yet the writer for the *Tribune* cried that “the subscription list for the engravings remains almost blank,” and scolded the city: “Anything is good enough for Chicago; it contains a community without appreciation of true



Fig. 26. Frederic Edwin Church, *Cotopaxi*, 1862. Oil on canvas, 48 x 85 in. The Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Mich., Founders Society Purchase, with funds from Mr. and Mrs. Richard A. Manoogian, Robert H. Tannahill Foundation Fund, Gibbs-Williams Fund, Dexter M. Ferry, Jr. Fund, Merrill Fund, and Beatrice W. Rogers Fund



Fig. 27. Frederic Edwin Church, *Chimborazo*, 1864. Oil on canvas, 48 x 84 in. Virginia Steele Scott Collection, Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, Calif.

art, and is well suited with colored lithographs and ordinary mezzotints.”<sup>150</sup>

Though the same commentator predicted an “enthusiastic reception” in St. Louis, where *The Heart of the Andes* next arrived at the end of February 1861, only some twenty-four hundred visitors showed up at the city’s Academy of Fine Arts to see it, and profits after expenses were scarcely two hundred dollars.<sup>151</sup> Still, more than a few of those attending fairly gawked at the picture, including a twenty-six-year-old Mississippi river pilot named Samuel L. Clemens, later Mark Twain. In a letter to a relative, Clemens conveyed how at once compelling and excruciating the painting could be for the ordinary observer:

I have just returned from a visit to the most wonder-

fully beautiful painting which this city has ever seen—Church’s “Heart of the Andes.” . . . I have seen it several times, but it is always a new picture—*totally* new—you seem to see nothing the second time which you saw the first. We took the opera glass, and examined its beauties minutely, for the naked eye cannot discern the little wayside flowers, and soft shadows and patches of sunshine, and half-hidden bunches of grass and jets of water which form some of its most enchanting features. There is no slurring of perspective effect about it—the most distant—the minutest object in it has a marked and distinct *personality*—so that you may count the very leaves on the trees. When you first see the tame, ordinary-looking picture, your first impulse is to turn your back upon it, and say “Humbug”—but





Fig. 28. Jasper Francis Cropsey, *Autumn—On the Hudson River*, 1860. Oil on canvas, 60 x 108 in. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Gift of the Avalon Foundation, 1993

your third visit will find your brain gasping and straining with futile efforts to take all the wonder in—and appreciate it in its fulness and understand how such a miracle could have been conceived and executed by human brain and human hands. You will never get tired of looking at the picture, but your reflections—your efforts to grasp an intelligible Something—you hardly know what—will grow so painful that you will have to go away from the thing, in order to obtain relief. You may find relief, but you cannot banish the picture—it remains with you still. It is in my mind now—and the smallest feature could not be removed without my detecting it. So much for the “Heart of the Andes.”<sup>152</sup>

With war imminent, the national tour of *The Heart of the Andes* was concluded close to home, in Brooklyn, in

April and May of 1861. Not surprisingly, given the political tides and yet a third New York showing, both critical and popular response dropped off precipitously.<sup>153</sup> But the painting had sustained its appeal long enough. In early 1861 Church completed his third (after *Niagara* and *The Heart of the Andes*) major exhibition picture, *Icebergs* (Dallas Museum of Fine Arts). Virtually as large as *The Heart of the Andes*, *Icebergs* was exhibited late that April, possibly in the same frame, thereby ensuring a smooth succession of Frederic Church performances.<sup>154</sup>

### Successors, Competitors, Influence

If *The Heart of the Andes* represented for Church in 1859 his ultimate interpretation of the equatorial New World, it is also true that he had many good years ahead of him to paint,

and the wealth of fieldwork from his two expeditions to South America would scarcely have permitted him to abandon it as a subject. The dramatic sketches he had made in 1857 of the fuming volcano Cotopaxi and his excursion to the perennially rumbling Sangay on the same trip demanded expression. The result, in 1862, was the seven-foot painting *Cotopaxi* (fig. 26). For all the heat and pall of this picture, its design may well have been prompted by *The Heart of the Andes* and, especially, its early sources, the June 5, 1857, composition drawing of Chimborazo and the related oil sketch (see fig. 13 and colorplate 5). The pictorial strategy common to them is the misty or smoky dialogue between a mountain and a celestial orb, the moon in the former and the sun in the latter. Church could not resist

portraying Chimborazo once more, in another seven-foot canvas completed in 1864 (fig. 27). The later picture is fascinating as a revision of *The Heart of the Andes*, since it returns the viewer to the same lowland jungle vantage point that the artist had first considered for the earlier picture (see figs. 17, 18). From the surface of a tropical river flanked by palms as well as by deciduous trees, the eye rises over clay-colored cordilleras to what has become a mere apparition of Chimborazo's summit floating in the planet's ether. The aspect and perspective evokes Church's perception of the mountain—"like a white cloud"—from Guayaquil in May 1857. The successive climatic zones described in *The Heart of the Andes* are here dissolved: virtually everything above the level of the forest seems heavenly rather than terrestrial.



Fig. 29. Edmund Darch Lewis, *Tropical Landscape*, 1862. Oil on canvas, 55 x 88 in. Private Collection

In their day, *Chimborazo* and *Cotopaxi* were said to have been intended by Church as pendants to *The Heart of the Andes*, the three pictures forming a triptych—"an epic of the Tropics in color"<sup>155</sup>—that conceptually links them to Martin's three *Last Judgment* pictures, and more distantly to Cole's historical and religious landscape serials.<sup>156</sup> *Cotopaxi*, to have hung on the right of *The Heart of the Andes*, would embody the principle of the Sublime (or fearsome), in accordance with the authoritative aesthetic philosophy formulated by Edmund Burke in the mid-eighteenth century; *Chimborazo*, to have hung on the left, would represent the Beautiful; *The Heart of the Andes*, as a British critic said, combined "power with repose," or both of Burke's principles.<sup>157</sup> But whatever Church's intention with the three pictures, it was not until the Metropolitan Museum's 1987 exhibition of Hudson River School masterpieces, "American Paradise," that they were displayed together.<sup>158</sup>

Despite the merits of these and several major tropical pictures painted up to 1877,<sup>159</sup> with the possible exception of *Cotopaxi*, there was an anticlimactic quality to all of them. Most of them, like *The Heart of the Andes*, were offered as public attractions; yet, unlike the 1859 picture, they were commissioned by private collectors from whom Church had reasonable assurance he could collect a handsome price. The effect of promoting his early large works as popular art was that they attracted an affluent clientele whose demand for his subsequent pictures spared him the trouble and expense of continuing blockbuster exhibitions on the same scale if at all. The changing commercial circumstances may well have led him not only to simplify and unify his conceptions—a wise departure from the intimidating detail of *The Heart of the Andes*—but to scale down the size of his pictures to accommodate the limitations of gallery space in the houses of his patrons. In this way, his



Fig. 30. Andrew Melrose, *A Morning in the Andes*, 1870. Oil on canvas, 37 x 72 in. The Newark Museum, Newark, N.J., Purchase 1984, The Members' Fund



Fig. 31. Thomas Moran, *The New World*, 1864. Oil on canvas, 23 x 46 in. Private Collection

pictures were more easily integrated into the expanding collections of the burgeoning wealthy class after the Civil War. Few of the subsequent tropical pictures, moreover, were engraved.

But the artist's gradual retreat from popular marketing was undoubtedly also motivated by the unseemly quantity and, often, quality of the competition that *The Heart of the Andes* had awakened in America, and even abroad. The painting had barely left England before Jasper Cropsey, the Staten Island-born Hudson River School painter then living in London, began his most renowned canvas, *Autumn—On the Hudson River* (fig. 28). In the spring of 1860 Cropsey offered his panoramic rendition of American woodlands to a British audience much as Church had offered the tropics to the American public—as an exotic landscape. Moreover, Cropsey had mantled his forest in the glowing tints of the American autumn, a season not marked by dramatic color in the British countryside.<sup>160</sup> The acclaim

his painting received in England boosted Cropsey's reputation at home; when he returned to the United States in 1863, he produced several even larger pictures of valleys and battlefields in Pennsylvania.<sup>161</sup> The young Ohio artist William Sonntag competed with the second New York exhibition of *The Heart of the Andes* by showing his large ideal landscape *Dream of Italy*, “admirably framed and draped,” at the Düsseldorf Gallery in the autumn of 1859.<sup>162</sup> In the space of three years, from 1860 to 1862, the Boston landscape painter George Loring Brown turned out three pictures of exactly the same dimensions as *The Heart of the Andes*.<sup>163</sup> Two of them he quickly sold to the Prince of Wales (Sandringham House, Norfolk, England), and one of these, *The Crown of New England*, a portrait of Mount Washington in New Hampshire, must have been intended to appeal as a New England counterpart to the portrait of Chimborazo in *The Heart of the Andes*.

Even more awkward for Church may have been the fact

that South American or tropical subjects had begun to proliferate in the pictures of other artists. *The Heart of the Andes* itself was copied—by way of the engraving—numerous times well into the 1870s, to the point that Church's concern about the replicas was aired in the press.<sup>164</sup> Perhaps the most prominent copy is the nearly six-foot picture done in 1871 by the Cincinnati painter Robert Duncanson (David David, Inc., Philadelphia).<sup>165</sup> Yet even Duncanson's largest painting, *Land of the Lotus Eaters* (1861; Collection of His Royal Majesty, the King of Sweden), finished a decade earlier and inspired by Tennyson's poem of that title, could scarcely have been conceived without the artist's having seen Church's picture in Cincinnati in the winter of that year.<sup>166</sup> Just before *The Heart of the Andes*

arrived in Philadelphia in March 1860, the local landscape painter Edmund Darch Lewis had returned from Cuba, another tropical nation visited by Humboldt, and begun work on his *Queen of the Antilles*. Of all these offspring of Church's painting, *Queen of the Antilles*, along with several successors (such as fig. 29), bears perhaps the closest resemblance to it.<sup>167</sup> Lewis's Cuban paintings represent the best work he ever did, testimony to the high technical standard set by *The Heart of the Andes*. A large painting entitled *Morning in the Andes* (fig. 30), finished in 1870 by the New Jersey landscape painter Andrew Melrose—for whom travel in the southern hemisphere has never been documented<sup>168</sup>—clearly stems from *The Heart of the Andes*. Yet some of its features and its atmospheric qualities correspond more



Fig. 32. Louis Remy Mignot, *Landscape in Ecuador*, 1859. Oil on canvas, 24 x 39 1/2 in. North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, Purchased with funds from various donors, by exchange

closely to Martin's *The Plains of Heaven*, which had stimulated Church. The young Thomas Moran, whose name later became synonymous with western scenery, at least twice depicted Columbus's arrival in America (fig. 31) in settings that recall *Cotopaxi* (fig. 26) and some of Church's other equatorial scenes.

Following the example of Church, several artists made travel and work south of the United States border a significant part of their careers. Central and South American landscapes were the specialty of California émigrés Norton Bush and Granville Perkins. In New York, Henry A. Ferguson, who traveled widely in the Andes in the early 1870s, distinguished himself with his mountain vistas of Peru.<sup>169</sup> Louis Mignot, Church's companion on the 1857 excursion to Ecuador, executed many of what are perhaps the most impressive equatorial landscape pictures (fig. 32) to be measured against Church's achievements.<sup>170</sup> The South American sojourns undertaken by Martin Johnson Heade in the 1860s and 1870s were prompted by his friendship with Church beginning the year that *The Heart of the Andes* was introduced. Heade's portrayals of hummingbird species in their natural habitats (fig. 33) recall the picturesque combinations of flora and fauna represented on a miniature scale in the foreground of Church's painting.<sup>171</sup>

Surely no review of the influence of *The Heart of the Andes* could overlook its effect on American frontier art and its prime representative, Albert Bierstadt. Four years younger than Church, Bierstadt became his chief rival in monumental landscape painting and, with Church, the champion and later the villain of the national art. Like Church, he was an original tenant of the Studio Building. Having already acquired a name for himself with outsize paintings of the Alps,<sup>172</sup> he must have coveted the publicity preceding the debut of Church's exotic landscape in April 1859. Just before the opening, he embarked on the first of many trips to the West to gather material for a succession



Fig. 33. Martin Johnson Heade, *Hummingbird and Passionflowers*, ca. 1875–85. Oil on canvas, 20 x 12 in. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Albert Weatherby Fund, 1946 (46.17)

of heroic landscapes on which his notoriety would rest.<sup>173</sup> The first major painting in this line, *The Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak* (fig. 34), signaled for many the arrival of a serious contender for Church's throne. Surely Bierstadt's picture represented a deliberate challenge to Church, and to *The Heart of the Andes* in particular. Here, on a scale slightly exceeding Church's Great Picture, was a magnification on canvas of an America that was comparably sublime



but part of the national domain. Bierstadt neglected none of Church's picturesque properties: a snow-capped mountain, framing trees, a pool, and a waterfall. For foreground detail he substituted anthropology—a tribe of Shoshone Indians—for Church's botany. He disposed these elements, and formal devices such as light and shadow, with conscious symmetry, stagelike clarity, and a breadth of handling that seemed calculated to “correct” the apparently piecemeal construction of *The Heart of the Andes*. Although *The Rocky Mountains* was completed in early 1863, Bierstadt did not give it a sustained exhibition in New York until early the following year, and then only by way of ensuring its inclusion in April in the art gallery of the Metropolitan Sanitary Fair mounted in Union Square.<sup>174</sup> There it was placed in the middle of the long hall directly opposite *The Heart of the Andes* (fig. 35); at the end of the gallery stood another icon of national art, Emanuel Leutze's *Washington Crossing the Delaware* (1851; Metropolitan Museum of Art). The presence of the three paintings in the same space was prophetic, as was the exhibition itself. The contemporary American and European masterworks seen there by a large and patriotic audience revived calls for an institution New York still sorely lacked: a metropolitan museum of art. Six years later, in 1870, several members of the art committee of the Metropolitan Fair, in addition to such newcomers as Frederic Church, united to create a public gallery bearing that name.<sup>175</sup> Along with Leutze's picture, both *The Heart of the Andes* and *The Rocky Mountains* eventually made their way into the collection of the new museum, where today the two landscapes face each other as they did on the Fair gallery walls.

But there, in April 1864, the immediate portents of the contest seemed cloudy for Church. Citing the “peculiar” beauties of Church's “immortal piece,” the *New York Herald* reviewer decided that the subject matter of Bierstadt's painting “draws from the mind a compulsory verdict in

favor of the author of so sublime a conquest.”<sup>176</sup> Previously, the *Times* reviewer had admitted the seductiveness of Bierstadt's broader style of “mingled power and softness, [which] charms as much as it impresses.” In adding that *The Rocky Mountains* “is more coherent than works of its size are apt to be, and though large, has not been degraded by too much minutiae of execution,”<sup>177</sup> the critic could have been alluding only to *The Heart of the Andes*.

Bierstadt, moreover, did not seek to stake his claim of primacy merely on the strength of his painting. Just a few steps from the gallery, visitors entered what was alternately termed Mr. Bierstadt's Indian Department or Monster Wigwam. In the chamber, Native Americans whom the artist had hired from an upstate reservation performed dances on a stage of green baize before tepees erected in front of a backdrop representing the background of *The Rocky Mountains*.<sup>178</sup> Church's brand of showmanship was no match for Bierstadt's Wild West burlesque; its patriotic, non-profit intent insulated the younger painter from charges of meretriciousness. His inaugural splash in the arena of frontier art at the very least tested Church's leadership in American landscape painting.

For both artists the presence of their most renowned pictures at the Fair may have represented the consummation of their careers, but one in which their eventual decline can be detected. For one thing, the exclusivity that each artist had sought in his major exhibitions was sacrificed. Of the two now opposed Great Pictures the *Times* critic observed:

Neither of them looks so well here as when seen by themselves and surrounded by all the appliances of the skilful picture-hanger. They are beautiful pictures, and well deserve the stand they have taken as pioneers in the advance stride of American art. But they are now in company that painfully tries their



Fig. 34. Albert Bierstadt, *The Rocky Mountains*, 1863. Oil on canvas, 73 1/4 x 120 3/4 in. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1907 (07.123)

merits. Perhaps they would retain their reputation better if they had not intruded into the presence of so much splendid art as everywhere surrounds them.<sup>179</sup>

Much of the “splendid art” referred to was foreign, most of it French academic, and most of that not landscape but figural. Moreover, it was fast filling the walls of Americans enriched by the industrial juggernaut of the Union war machine. Over the next dozen years, a contest would mount between the frontier ethos and Continental European culture for the favor of America’s new business elite. Just after the centennial, the tension would split the National Academy of Design and send the old American landscape painting fraternity—now pasted with the title Hudson

River School—into a tailspin.<sup>180</sup> Inasmuch as landscape painting survived—indeed, prevailed—it was transformed, taking the path marked by a small but fervent voice in the wilderness in the Civil War years, that of George Inness. Church’s contemporary, Inness would ultimately dominate American landscape painting in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In exhibiting his eight-foot painting *The Sign of Promise*<sup>181</sup> as a single-picture attraction in Boston and New York in 1863, Inness must be counted among those painters incited by the showings of *The Heart of the Andes* and Church’s succeeding pictures, *Icebergs* and *Cotopaxi*, with their allusions to the war.<sup>182</sup> But where Inness followed Church in the size and exclusive display of his painting, he did so to posit an overtly pious, subjective, and





Fig. 35. Artist unknown, *Art Gallery of the Metropolitan Fair, Union Square, New York, April 1864*. Engraving, *Harper's Weekly*, April 16, 1864, p. 224. Collection, General Research Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

painterly alternative to Church's factuality and detail. And he (or a sympathizer) said so in the pamphlet prepared for the exhibition:

[The artist] does not offer this picture as an illustration of the epic in landscape, but only as the visible expression of a strongly felt emotion of Hope and Promise. How well that emotion is expressed, the public must judge for themselves. The feeling sought to be conveyed, the true meaning of the picture will not be found in any hieroglyphics, for which those who seek them will seek in vain.<sup>183</sup>

The pictorial vocabulary of Inness's "feeling" was essentially that of the Barbizon painters of France, whose vigorous and painterly approach he adopted as a vehicle of mood. His statement of purpose with *The Sign of Promise* caused no immediate stall in the engines of Church's and Bierstadt's careers, but Inness was already beginning to win influential champions. In the year that saw *The Rocky Mountains*

challenging *The Heart of the Andes* at the Metropolitan Fair, the critic James Jackson Jarves set an ideal Italian landscape composition by Inness against both those scenic pictures:

The radical difference between the antagonistic styles of these masters will be felt at once. However much our admiration is captivated for a season by the dramatic spectacular touch of Church and his gem-like, flaming brilliancy of color, or the broader, less artificial, colder tinting of Bierstadt, the rich harmony of Inness and attendant depth of feeling . . . seize fast hold of the imagination, and put the spectator on his feet in the very heart of the scene. He becomes an integral part of the landscape. In the other paintings he is a mere looker-on, who, after the surprise of novelty is gone, coolly or impatiently criticises the view.<sup>184</sup>

With the advocacy of critics like Jarves, the taste for Inness's pictures would grow incrementally, but it would be

another fifteen years or more before American landscape painting became his domain. For the value and reputation of *The Heart of the Andes*, it may have been fortunate that its first change of ownership occurred just before Inness's dominance was fully established. Following the death in 1875 of the first purchaser, William Blodgett, his collection was dispersed at auction, but *The Heart of the Andes* managed to attract a buyer beforehand for its original purchase price of \$10,000.<sup>185</sup> David E. Dows of New York installed the painting so that it was visible just as one entered his house.<sup>186</sup> Although Blodgett frequently opened his gallery of international paintings to interested parties, Dow evidently coveted his privacy, for the picture was little seen for the next three decades.<sup>187</sup>

Of course, by 1880, both *The Heart of the Andes* and Frederic Church were little sought. The declining reputation of his pictures had coincided with his progressive inability to paint them. Rheumatoid arthritis crippled the artist's hands, forcing him largely to abandon the easel. The intrepid Yankee painter who had traveled most of the globe, including Europe and the Mideast in 1868–69, and whose paintings reflected his presence everywhere he had been, increasingly withdrew to Olana, his hilltop keep on the Hudson, which he ceaselessly altered and added to. Church and his family entertained a shrinking circle of old friends; he wintered in Mexico to soothe his hands. Isabel passed away in 1899. Stopping in New York en route from Mexico to Hudson at the turn of the century, Church fell ill and died at the house of a friend.

## The Legacy

It took Church's death in 1900 and, more particularly, his status as a founding member of the Metropolitan Museum, to bring *The Heart of the Andes* once more into the light, at a retrospective exhibition of his work that year at the

Museum. Appropriate respect for the departed was leavened with condescension. "The fact that [Church] was still alive had been almost forgotten by present day artists," noted one eulogist.<sup>188</sup> The *Times* reviewer conceded to *The Heart of the Andes* a "certain sense of power and truthfulness," but with others found it "suggestively like a panorama," and cited, along with the deceased George Inness, "twenty American landscapists of the present day whose works in technique, color, composition, and truthfulness far surpass any that [Church] ever painted."<sup>189</sup>

Still, to the 1900 exhibition at the Metropolitan may well be owed the safe custodianship of the painting for posterity. For all the diffidence shown it, *The Heart of the Andes* had appeared again and was recalled for its phenomenal status forty years before. Although the Metropolitan was then purchasing only the works of living American painters, it had already been given one Church, and his most famous picture, newly rediscovered, seemed a covetable benchmark of national painting. That the Museum's secretary, Robert W. deForest, was a cousin of Isabel Carnes and a fervent advocate of American art may have lent a personal factor to its desirability.<sup>190</sup> When in 1909 it was gratefully accepted from Dow's widow, deForest selectively roused "the older generation of our Members" to remind them of "the commanding position in American art occupied by the late Mr. Church and the acclaim given to this particular picture."<sup>191</sup>

Yet it would be another half-century before *The Heart of the Andes* would assume its former preeminence, amid the revival of the Hudson River School. Although the Metropolitan cannot be accused of ever having concealed the painting (which would not have been easy anyway), it was deemed too unwieldy to include even in its own pioneer one-gallery exhibition "The Hudson River School of Painters" in 1917. The catalogue of the show referred to its availability in another gallery.<sup>192</sup> For the loan shows of

Hudson River School painting that appeared with accelerating frequency in later years, *The Heart of the Andes* may have been considered too risky to travel; since its acquisition in 1909, it has left the Museum only twice on loans, to exhibitions in Boston and Washington, D.C. in 1970 and 1989, respectively.<sup>193</sup>

But, in addition to its size, the picture was probably burdened with another liability that, to a lesser extent, was shared by many of Church's paintings during the early phases of the Hudson River School revival. Its tropical subject did not conform to the early twentieth century's limited conception of the school, created by the provincial name it had acquired when it began its slide into disrepute in the 1870s. Popular understanding of "Hudson River School" early denoted local subject matter more than anything else.<sup>194</sup> Church's jungles, icebergs, and deserts beyond the borders of the United States seemed to test the definition of the term and the conception of the painters it had come to represent. Scholars and critics had long lost the ready appreciation of the school held by the artist's contemporaries that its true subject was nature, that the New World was nature at its most natural, and that in the equatorial New World, "the heart of the Andes," Church—with Humboldt's help—had found nature epitomized.

The belated comeback of *The Heart of the Andes* was incited in great measure by the same forces that had led to its creation: natural history, South America, and Alexander von Humboldt. The early decades of the twentieth century represented a rich period of expedition activity for New York's two major cultural institutions—for the Metropolitan Museum in Egypt and for the American Museum of Natural History in the high Andes of Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru, among other places. The latter's activity led not only to enriched collections and the creation of new habitat dioramas but to many publications by the museum staff, including an entire issue of *Natural History*, published in the

summer of 1924, devoted to South and Central America. The ornithologist Frank Chapman invoked Humboldt's geography of plants as a model for the climatic distribution of birds in the Andes.<sup>195</sup> Humboldt was memorialized in an article that extolled his scientific thinking but even more his pioneering exploration of South America, which drew Darwin and, eventually, the American Museum's naturalists in its wake.<sup>196</sup> Not least of all, Frederic Church was recalled in a brief but appreciative article as "Painter of the Andes." Neither *The Heart of the Andes* nor its former reputation was highlighted by the author, H. W. Schwarz, but it was illustrated and the reader was referred to Church's pictures at the Metropolitan and at the New York Public Library (which then owned *Cotopaxi*), and to the huge cache of South American drawings and oil sketches by Church that had recently been given by his son Louis to the Museum of the Arts of Decoration at Cooper Union, now the Cooper-Hewitt National Museum of Design, Smithsonian Institution.<sup>197</sup>

Despite the attention drawn to Church, a generation later *The Heart of the Andes* could still be slighted as "a less distinguished piece of painting" than his 1864 *Chimborazo*. That picture was the major South American landscape selected to represent the artist in the landmark revival exhibition "The Hudson River School and the Early American Landscape Tradition," mounted at the Art Institute of Chicago and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York in the winter and spring of 1945.<sup>198</sup> As if to counter the snub, Albert Ten Eyck Gardner, then a research fellow in the Department of Paintings at the Metropolitan and later associate curator of American Paintings and Sculpture there, published an article on the painting in the *Museum Bulletin* in October of that year.<sup>199</sup> Shrewdly, perhaps, Gardner did not seek to tout *The Heart of the Andes* on purely aesthetic grounds. Instead, anticipating by many years the bias of historians of American art for the object as cultural artifact,

he made it the artistic measure of America's age of science, invention, and territorial conquest. Humboldt and *Cosmos* were invoked at length, of course, but, virtually for the first time since 1859, a portrait of the phenomenal promotion of and response to the painting—and the significance once attributed to it for the progress of American art—was assembled through Gardner's diligent research. Gardner had merely recognized that *The Heart of the Andes* story rivaled the spectacle of *The Heart of the Andes* itself. Certain it is, too, that his rediscovery of the reputation of the picture marked the departure point for future study of the artist, which converged in the 1950s with the American epoch of the Cold War, rightist politics, space probes, movie epics, action painting, celebrity cults, and fads. When the Church scholar David Huntington produced his doctoral thesis and monograph on the artist in the 1960s, his first chapters resurrected the so-called Rage of 1859.

In restoring *The Heart of the Andes* to the forefront of Church's oeuvre, historians have adroitly sidestepped the abiding question: Is it the artist's best painting? One must concede that it is not. *Niagara*, *Cotopaxi*, perhaps even *Chimborazo* and several others are more beautiful works. But if one asks whether *The Heart of the Andes* is Church's greatest picture, one is certainly tempted to affirm that it is. Inasmuch as it reflects the overweening ambitions of its prime literary inspiration, Humboldt's *Cosmos*, the painting in many ways shares the virtues and flaws of the naturalist's ultimate testament. On first impression, the fine print, massive paragraphs, discursive sentences, and multiple volumes of *Cosmos* daunt the modern reader in the way that, more subliminally, the density of natural description in *The Heart of the Andes* initially resists the viewer's being drawn into its continental space. With both prose and image, one must begin to read, allowing instruction to precede fascination, seduction to resolve into admi-

ration. For both the scientist and the artist their reach exceeded their grasp. But it is a high order of mere curiosity that *The Heart of the Andes* gratifies, capable of inducing the breathless wonder one experiences in the places it portrays, just as Humboldt's unflagging citation of phenomena and his brilliant leaps of analogy build episodically to moving psalms of sheer awe at creation. It is the episodic marveling elicited by the book and the picture, as well as one's profound respect for the undertaking of each, that imparts a measure of greatness to both.

Still, one may challenge further how cogent and relevant is such marveling today. Church scholarship must perennially contend with the symbolism of the year 1859, which witnessed not only *The Heart of the Andes*'s birth and Humboldt's death but the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species*.<sup>200</sup> Darwin's discovery of conflict as the factor that determines the perpetuation and variety of animate life dispelled the assumptions of natural harmony and nobility that Humboldt, a child of the Enlightenment, had projected onto his observations. The man-made and natural crosses, the rainbows, auroras, and churches ubiquitous in Church's pictures are expressions of essentially the same faith. Darwin earned immortality precisely for debunking the morality of nature promulgated by Humboldt and Church. But in the morally neutral struggle of natural selection, manifested in the planet's altering state in modern times, its principal player, humankind, has threatened its own survival in assuring its own preeminence.<sup>201</sup> Modern viewers may regard the wonder communicated by Humboldt and Church as shallow, pretentious, and obsolete, or be reminded by their excitement that to lose that wonder dooms the motivation to maintain the world humanity has inherited. As the visual expression of *Cosmos*, *The Heart of the Andes* can fortify an enlightened projection of human will to preserve what the scientist and the artist deemed the natural estate.



## Notes

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1. The definitive life of Frederic Church is still David C. Huntington, "Frederic Edwin Church (1826–1900), Painter of the New World Adamic Myth" (diss. Yale University, 1960; repr. University Microfilms Inc., 1969); see also David Huntington, *The Landscapes of Frederic Edwin Church* (New York: Braziller, 1966). The most recent source for the artist's life is Franklin Kelly, "A Passion for Landscape: the Paintings of Frederic Edwin Church," in Franklin Kelly, *Frederic Edwin Church*, exh. cat., The National Gallery of Art (Washington, D.C., 1990), pp. 32–75. Church's early life and career are also described, with new information, in Franklin Kelly, *Frederic Edwin Church and the National Landscape* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988), pp. 1–21.
2. The most complete account and insightful interpretation of Church's Niagara is Jeremy Adamson, *Niagara; Two Centuries of Changing Attitudes*, exh. cat., The Corcoran Gallery of Art (Washington, D.C., 1985), pp. 61–69.
3. Huntington, "Church," pp. 13–14.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 15–18.
5. Quoted in Louis L. Noble, *The Course of Empire, The Voyage of Life and other Pictures of Thomas Cole, N.A.* (New York: Cornish, Lamport and Company, 1853), p. 364.
6. For Humboldt, the best modern biography in English is L. Kellner, *Alexander von Humboldt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963). Other relevant sources for specific information in this essay are specified below in the notes.
7. The critical importance of Humboldt for Darwin and other scientists of the nineteenth century is illuminated in Stephen Jay Gould, "Church, Humboldt, and Darwin: The Tension and Harmony of Art and Science," in Kelly, *Frederic Edwin Church*, pp. 96–97; and "Alexander von Humboldt, South American Explorer and Progenitor of Explorers," *Natural History* 24 (July-Aug. 1924), pp. 450–51.
8. Church's personal library contained three works by Humboldt, all in popular English editions: *Cosmos: a Sketch of a Physical Description of the Universe*, 5 vols., trans. E. C. Otté (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1849–59); with Aimé Bonpland, *Personal Narrative of Travels to the Equinoctial Regions of America, during the Years 1799–1804*, 3 vols., trans. and ed. Thomasina Ross (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1852); and *Aspects of Nature*, trans. Mrs. Sabine (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longman's, 1849). The Bohn popular library editions of Humboldt were reprinted through the remainder of the century.
9. First-person accounts of the successive climbs of Chimborazo by Humboldt, Bonpland, and Carlos Montúfar in 1802 and by J.-B. Boussingault in 1831—both failed to reach the summit—are reprinted in Edward Whymper, *Travels among the Great Andes of the Equator* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1892), pp. 428–35. Whymper was the first to reach the top of Chimborazo, in 1880.
10. Val Gendron, *The Dragon Tree: A Life of Alexander von Humboldt* (New York: Longman's, Green and Co., 1961), p. 108.
11. Peale's portrait of Humboldt is now in the Mutter Museum, The College of Physicians of Philadelphia. See Halina Nelken, *Alexander von Humboldt: His Portraits and Their Artists* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1980), pp. 58–61.
12. Humboldt, *Cosmos*, vol. 2, p. 447.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 452.
14. For Church's *plein-air* sketching practices, see Theodore E. Stebbins, Jr., *Close Observation: Selected Oil Sketches by Frederic E. Church*, exh. cat., Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Smithsonian Institution (Washington, D.C., 1978), pp. 3–13. Durand advocated painting directly from nature in his well-known "Letters on Landscape Painting," published serially in *The Crayon* 1–2 (January–July 1855).
15. Humboldt, *Cosmos*, vol. 1, p. 12.

16. Millicent E. Selsam, ed., *Star, Mosquitoes and Crocodiles: The American Travels of Alexander von Humboldt* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 121.
17. Alexander von Humboldt and Aimé Bonpland, *Essai sur la géographie des plantes, accompagné d'un tableau physique des régions équinoxiales, fondés sur de mesures exécutées, depuis le dixième degré de latitude boréale jusqu'au dixième degré de latitude australe, pendant les années 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802 et 1803* (Paris: F. Schoell, 1807).
18. Alexander von Humboldt and Aimé Bonpland, *Personal Narrative of Travels to the Equinoctial Regions of the New Continent during the Years 1799–1804*, trans. Helen Maria Williams, vol. 7 (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, 1829), frontispiece. The illustration was first published in the original French version of this work, *Voyage de Humboldt et Bonpland. Atlas Géographique et Physique des Régions Équinoxiales du Nouveau Continent* (Paris: Librairie de Gide, 1814–34), pl. 1x.
19. Humboldt, *Personal Narrative* (1852), vol. 1, p. 405.
20. Alexander von Humboldt, *Views of Nature* (1852; repr. London: George Bell and Sons, 1902), p. 156.
21. Humboldt, *Cosmos*, vol. 1, p. 54. For an illuminating overview of nineteenth-century geological study, and of Church's response to it in his paintings, see Katherine Manthorne, *Creation and Renewal: Views of Cotopaxi by Frederic Edwin Church*, exh. cat., National Museum of American Art (Washington, D.C., 1985), esp. pp. 31–51.
22. Humboldt, *Cosmos*, vol. 2, p. 452.
23. Ibid.
24. See Katherine Manthorne, *Tropical Renaissance* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), pp. 42–43, 51–54, for concise overviews of U. S. interests and activity in Central and South America in the mid-nineteenth century.
25. For Field's interests and activity in South America, see Samuel Carter III, *Cyrus W. Field: Man of Two Worlds* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), pp. 78–90.
26. Huntington, *Landscapes of Church*, p. 30.
27. For several mid-century moving panoramas of the Mississippi River, see John Francis McDermott, *The Lost Panoramas of the Mississippi* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958). For the Mammoth Cave panorama, see Joseph Earl Arrington, "George Brewer's Moving Panoramas of the Mammoth Cave and other Natural Wonders of America," *Filson Club Historical Quarterly* 39, pt. 1 (January 1965), pp. 22–43, pt. 2 (April 1965), pp. 151–69.
28. *Mount Ktaadn (Katahdin)* (1853; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven); *The Natural Bridge, Virginia* (1852; Bayly Art Museum of the University of Virginia, Charlottesville).
29. Huntington, "Church," p. 39; Huntington, *Landscapes of Church*, pp. 34–37; and Kelly, *National Landscape*, pp. 55–59, have treated the special significance of *New England Scenery* within Church's oeuvre.
30. Church's two South American trips are described in detail, and his accounts from each are frequently quoted, in David C. Huntington, "Landscape and Diaries: The South American Trips of F. E. Church," *The Brooklyn Museum Annual* 5 (1963–64), pp. 65–99.
31. Church evidently maintained a diary for the entire 1853 trip to South America, but only about two-thirds of it survive. The surviving portion is contained in a black leather-bound volume of light blue paper. The initial part of the diary, written in Spanish, records the journey from May 2 to July 9, 1853. It is immediately followed by the concluding part of the diary, recording Aug. 24 to Oct. 18. In the first entry of the concluding part, Church mentions that he lost a diary, presumably the middle part covering the period from July 10 to Aug. 23, which he must have maintained separately from the first part. Two other small notebooks from the 1853 trip document Church's visit to Tequendama Falls in Colombia. The diaries are all at the Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, New York. Incidents of the 1853 trip are also recorded in the artist's letters to his parents and sisters, preserved primarily at the library of the Henry Francis Du Pont Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware, and at Olana. Further documentation of the 1853 trip is in the dated and sited sketches Church made. Most of these are at the Cooper-Hewitt, National Museum of Design, Smithsonian Institution, New York; several are at Olana.
32. F. E. Church to his mother, Eliza Janes Church, Barranquilla, April 28, 1853, Joseph Downs Manuscript Collection, Henry Francis Du Pont Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.
33. Church to his sister Charlotte, Barranquilla, May 4, 1853, Winterthur.
34. *Tequendama Falls, near Bogotá, New Grenada* (1854; Cincinnati Art Museum).
35. Church to his mother, Eliza, Bogota, July 7, 1853, Winterthur.
36. Church to his sister Charlotte, Popayán, Aug. 8, 1853, Winterthur.
37. Frederic Church, *Diary of the 1853 trip to South America*, Aug. 26, 1853, Olana.
38. Alexander von Humboldt, *Researches concerning the Institutions and Monuments of the ancient Inhabitants of America, with Descriptions and Views of some of the Most Striking Scenes in the Cordilleras!*, trans. Helen Maria Williams (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Browne, 1814), vol. 1, p. 231. This is the first English translation of the original French edition, *Voyage de Humboldt et Bonpland. Atlas Pittoresque* (Paris: F. Schoell, 1813).
39. The drawings are all at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum, accession nos. 1917.4.100, -.110, -.777a, -.779a. Included is one labeled "Composition suggested by the scenery on the road between Pasto and Quito" (1917.4.100) dated August 26, 1853, which may well be the "feeble sketch" Church referred to making on the day he "realised" his "ideal of the Cordilleras." Another, inscribed "Recollection of

- the view overlooking the Valley of Chota" (1917.4.110), is dated simply August 1853 and appears to repeat motifs from the composition of August 26. A double-page sketchbook drawing (1917.4.777a–.779a) dated August 19, 1853, and labeled "Mojasses . . . Elevated Plain," seems closest in character to the imagery in *The Andes of Ecuador*.
40. For the symbolism of crosses in Church's art, see Huntington, *Landscapes of Church*, pp. 16, 19, and idem, "Church and Luminism: Light for America's Elect," in John Wilmerding, *American Light*, exh. cat., National Gallery of Art (Washington, D.C., 1980), pp. 155–87, esp. pp. 158, 162. For the symbolism of the palm tree, see Manthorne, *Tropical Renaissance*, pp. 11–20.
  41. The vast majority of this material is in the Cooper-Hewitt Museum. The Magdalena River sketchbook(s?) drawings, in thick graphite line on blue-gray paper, have all been separated and individually accessioned. Some pages from a smaller, buff-paged sketchbook documenting scenes in southern Colombia and northern Ecuador are also preserved at Cooper-Hewitt.
  42. Church to his mother, Eliza, Honda, May 25, 1853, Winterthur.
  43. Church to his sister Elizabeth, Cartago, July 23, 1853, Winterthur.
  44. Church to his mother, Eliza, Pasto, Aug. 20, 1853, Winterthur.
  45. Church, 1853 South American Diary, Quito, September 3, 1853, Olana.
  46. Church, 1853 South American Diary, Machachi, Sept. 9, 1853, Olana.
  47. Ibid., San Juan, Sept. 12, 1853.
  48. Ibid., San Juan (near Riobamba), Sept. 17, 1853.
  49. For illustrations, see Manthorne, *Creation and Renewal*, pp. 13, 14, 77 (cat. no. 16), 80–81, 82 (cat. no. 26).
  50. Huntington, *Landscapes of Church*, p. 66.
  51. Henry T. Tuckerman, *Book of the Artists* (New York: G. P. Putnam and Son, 1867), p. 371.
  52. For the phenomenon of the Great Picture exhibition in America in the mid-nineteenth century, see Gerald L. Carr, *Frederic Edwin Church: The Icebergs* (Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, 1980), pp. 24–29; and idem., "American Art in Great Britain: The National Gallery Watercolor of *The Heart of the Andes*," *Studies in the History of Art* 12 (1982) pp. 84–87. Earlier manifestations of the Great Picture phenomenon, in England, where it originated in the 1780s, are reviewed in Richard Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), pp. 104–6, 408–15.
  53. The importance of Martin's *Judgment Triptych*, and of *The Plains of Heaven* in particular, has been illuminated by Carr, *The Icebergs*, pp. 27–28.
  54. For Martin's influence on Cole, see Ellwood C. Parry III, *The Art of Thomas Cole* (Newark, Del.: University of Delaware Press, 1988), pp. 70–75, 87–89, 180, 196–97, 241, 259. For Martin's influence on two of Church's early pictures, see Kelly, *Church*, pp. 41, 44.
  55. John Feaver, *The Art of John Martin* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 200.
  56. Bayard Taylor, "Art in London," *Cosmopolitan Art Journal* 1 (Sept. 1857), p. 155; *Albion* (New York), May 2, 1857, p. 213, and *New York Commercial Times*, Oct. 9, 1858, quoted in Thomas C. Grattan, *Civilized America* (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1859), vol. 2, pp. 128–29.
  57. For the links between the presentation of panoramas and exhibitions of large paintings, with special reference to *The Heart of the Andes*, see Kevin J. Avery, "The Heart of the Andes Exhibited: Frederic E. Church's Window on the Equatorial World," *American Art Journal* 18 (Winter 1986), pp. 60–68.
  58. The major documents of Church's 1857 trip to South America are his pencil drawings, many now in the Cooper-Hewitt Museum and at Olana, which were almost always dated and inscribed with the name of the subject or the site at which the drawing was made. These are supplemented by Church's diary of his excursion from Riobamba to Sangay volcano, July 9–12, 1857, and two surviving letters to A. C. Goodman, all preserved at Olana. One other letter, to George W. Warren, is in the Gratz Collection, Painters and Engravers, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania. The 1857 trip is summarized in Huntington, "Landscape and Diaries," pp. 86–91.
  59. For Mignot, see Manthorne, *Tropical Renaissance*, pp. 133–57, 185–86.
  60. In the Cooper-Hewitt Museum are preserved numerous sketchbook pages with pencil studies dating from May 15, when Church was still at Aspinwall (Colón), Panama, to May 29, just before he left Guayaquil for the interior of Ecuador. An additional plant study at Olana (OL.1980.1526), inscribed and dated "Jorje/June 1857/foreground," was probably done at San Jorjé, a village along the trail from Guayaquil to Guaranda.
  61. Church to A. C. Goodman, Guayaquil, May 27, 1857, Olana.
  62. Nine oil sketches of Chimborazo survive, all preserved in the Cooper-Hewitt Museum. Cooper-Hewitt also preserves at least twenty-two drawings and sketches made at Guaranda or Guanajo (now Guanujo) from June 3 to June 14, 1857. Additionally, Church made at least eleven quick sketches of views and motifs in and around Guaranda in an unlocated sketchbook formerly in the collection of Mrs. Theodore Winthrop Church. The sketchbook is now known only through a photostated copy preserved at Olana.
  63. In an unlocated sketchbook formerly in the collection of Mrs. Theodore Winthrop Church. The sketch is reproduced in Huntington, *Landscapes of Church*, fig. 27.
  64. Cooper-Hewitt Museum, no. 1917.4.241.



65. De Terra, pp. 122–25.
66. There are no records by Church of his stay with the Aguirres besides the drawings he made at or near their hacienda. The story of Church's commissioning the copy of the Aguirres' portrait of Humboldt is told in "Tribute to the Memory of Humboldt," *The Pulpit and Rostrum*, June 15, 1859, p. 117; Stoddard, *Humboldt*, pp. 228–29; Tuckerman, *Book of the Artists*, p. 370. See also Nelkin, *Humboldt: His Portraits and their Artists*, pp. 52–53.
67. Bayard Taylor to Humboldt, Rockford, Illinois, May 16, 1859, Olana. Taylor was fluent in German and wrote to Humboldt on Church's behalf.
68. The diary of the excursion to Sangay is at Olana. An oil sketch and a pencil-and-gouache drawing of Sangay are at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum and are illustrated in Manthorne, *Creation and Renewal*, pp. 40, 46.
69. Richard J. Koke, *American Landscape and Genre Paintings in the New-York Historical Society* (New York: New-York Historical Society, 1982), vol. 1, p. 179.
70. Compare, for example, the banana stalks and blue-blossomed bushes of the daisy family (*Aristequetia*) in the right foreground of *Cayambe* with the drawings at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum, respectively nos. 1917.4.827 and -.207.
71. *The Crayon* 5 (Jan. 1858), p. 24.
72. For a comprehensive history of the Studio Building, see Annette Blaugrund, "The Tenth Street Studio Building" (diss., Columbia University, 1987; repr. University Microfilms, Inc., 1987).
73. In addition to figure 18, a much-faded drawing entitled *The Heart of the Andes*, representing a tropical river bordered by deciduous trees resembling those in the foreground of the finished painting, is in the St. Louis Art Museum (acc. no. 5:1915; gift of R. C. Vose).
74. Botanist Patricio Mena, of Ecociencia, Ecuadorean Foundation for Ecological Studies, Quito, has suggested the Andean red birch (*Alnus acuminata*) as a possible model for the large trees in *The Heart of the Andes*. Theodore Winthrop, *A Companion to the Heart of the Andes* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1859), p. 36, termed the trees simply "oak-like."
75. For kind assistance in identifying the plants in the painting, I am grateful to James Luteyn, Senior Curator of Botany at the New York Botanical Garden; Patricio Mena, Ecociencia, Quito; Thomas Croat, P. A. Schulze Curator of Botany at the Missouri Botanical Garden, St. Louis; John Mickel, Senior Curator of Ferns at the New York Botanical Garden; and, indirectly via consultation with Dr. Luteyn, to Eric Christenson of the New York Botanical Garden; Harold Robinson, John Pruski, Dieter Wasshausen, Larry Skog, and John Kress, all of the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
76. For their assistance in identifying the birds and butterflies represented in *The Heart of the Andes*, I thank Mary LeCroy, Senior Scientific Assistant, and Emanuel Levine, volunteer in the Department of Ornithology; and Eric L. Quinter, Scientific Assistant, Department of Entomology, the American Museum of Natural History.
77. "Domestic Art Gossip," *The Crayon* 5 (March 1858), pp. 87–88.
78. For J.-B. Boussingault's climb, see Whymper, pp. 431–35. Kellner, *Humboldt*, p. 57, states that Humboldt "had to admit a twinge of annoyance when Boussingault . . . reached a height of 19,700 feet on Chimborazo in 1831. After more than thirty years, he was dethroned from his mountaineering eminence."
79. Church's earliest use of cross imagery in his painting may be in *To the Memory of Cole* (Des Moines Women's Club–Hoyt Sherman Place, Des Moines, Iowa), a souvenir of his deceased teacher. The presence of church steeples was fairly common in his early New England views, e.g., *View near Stockbridge* (ca. 1847; Manoogian Collection), *West Rock, New Haven* (1849; The New Britain Museum of American Art, New Britain, Conn.), and *New England Scenery* (fig. 7). For a discussion of the symbolic function of Church's church imagery, see Christopher Kent Wilson, "The Landscape of Democracy: Frederic Church's *West Rock, New Haven*," *American Art Journal* 18 (Summer 1986), pp. 24–27.
80. For full discussions of Cole's two major religious allegories, see Parry, pp. 226–59, 342–61.
81. For cultural manifestations of this revival in America, see *ibid.*, pp. 347–49.
82. Henry T. Tuckerman, *Characteristics of Literature* (Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1851), p. 76.
83. "Tribute to the Memory of Humboldt," *The Pulpit and Rostrum*, June 15, 1859, p. 119. The remarks of the eulogist, Rev. Joseph P. Thompson, actually referred to the mountains represented in *The Heart of the Andes*, "the way of ascent to which is by the Cross."
84. T.L.C. [Rev. Theodore L. Cuyler], "Church's 'Heart of the Andes.'—A Picture for Young Men," *Christian Intelligencer*, June 2, 1859, reprinted in *Littell's Living Age*, July 2, 1859, p. 64.
85. The business relationship between Church and McClure is described in excellent detail in Carr, "National Gallery Watercolor," pp. 87–95.
86. "Fine Arts. Church's New Picture," *New York Evening Post*, April 20, 1859, p. 2.
87. The memorandum of the contract is at Olana, and is summarized in Carr, "National Gallery Watercolor," p. 89.
88. The contract between Church and Blodgett, dated June 6, 1859, is at Olana and discussed in Carr, "National Gallery Watercolor," pp. 86–87.
89. Church's frame for *The Heart of the Andes* is described, along with other elaborate arrangements for the early exhibitions of the picture, in Avery, "The Heart of the Andes Exhibited," esp. pp. 55–60.

90. The interior decoration of the Studio Building was of dark-stained wood carved with motifs very similar to Church's frame, as revealed in the painting by Emanuel Leutze, *Worthington Whittredge at work in his Studio in Tenth Street* (1865; Reynolda House, Winston-Salem, North Carolina).
91. Descriptions of Church's screening and lighting strategies for the New York exhibition and elsewhere, and comparisons with English panorama and single-picture exhibitions, are given in Avery, "The Heart of the Andes Exhibited," pp. 53–65.
92. Winthrop, *A Companion to the Heart of the Andes*, p. 13.
93. For that journey, see Carr, *The Icebergs*, esp. pp. 34–54.
94. Rev. Louis L. Noble, *Church's Painting. The Heart of the Andes* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1859), pp. 4–8.
95. Winthrop, pp. 28, 38.
96. Noble, *The Heart of the Andes*, pp. 9–11.
97. "Mr. Church's New Picture," *New York Times*, April 28, 1859, p. 4.
98. Ibid. For a fuller discussion of the problems of gaslight at painting exhibitions in the nineteenth century, see Avery, "The Heart of the Andes Exhibited," pp. 53–55.
99. *New York Times*, April 28, 1859, p. 4.
100. "Fine Arts," *New York Tribune*, April 25, 1859, p. 7; "Mr. Church's New Picture—The Heart of the Andes," *New York Commercial Advertiser*, April 28, 1859, p. 3.
101. "The Heart of the Andes," *New York Commercial Advertiser*, May 9, 1859, p. 2.
102. "The Heart of the Andes," *New York Herald*, May 24, 1859, p. 5. The attendance figure of two thousand visitors on the last day is based on the gate receipts, \$553, with each visitor charged twenty-five cents admission.
103. *The Recollections of John Ferguson Weir*, ed. Theodore Sizer (New York: New-York Historical Society, 1957), p. 45.
104. "The Heart of the Andes," *New York Tribune*, May 24, 1859, p. 7. The dimensions of the Exhibition Room of the Studio Building are known from surviving plans for the structure, discussed in Blaugrund, "The Tenth Street Studio Building," p. 80.
105. "The Heart of the Andes," *New York Herald*, May 24, 1859, p. 5; "Art in New York," *Boston Daily Evening Transcript*, June 3, 1859, p. 1.
106. "Church's 'Heart of the Andes,'" *Littell's Living Age*, July 2, 1859, p. 64; "Correspondence of the Transcript, New York, May 21, 1859. Letter from New York," *Boston Daily Evening Transcript*, May 23, 1859, p. 1.
107. "Z," "Art in New York," *Boston Daily Evening Transcript*, June 3, 1859, p. 1; Pierre M. Irving, *The Life and Letters of Washington Irving* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1864), vol. 4, pp. 288–89.
108. "Letter from New York," *Boston Daily Evening Transcript*, May 23, 1859, p. 1.
109. John I. H. Baur, ed., "The Autobiography of Worthington Whittredge, 1820–1910," *Brooklyn Museum Journal* (1942), p. 29.
110. "Fine Arts. Church's new Picture," *New York Post*, April 20, 1859, p. 2.
111. "Mr. Church's New Picture," *New York Times*, April 28, 1859, p. 4.
112. "'The Heart of the Andes,'" *The Spirit of the Times* (New York), May 14, 1859, p. 157.
113. "Church's 'Heart of the Andes,'" *Cosmopolitan Art Journal* 3 (June 1859), p. 133.
114. "Church's Heart of the Andes," *Harper's Weekly*, May 7, 1859, p. 291.
115. "The Heart of the Andes," *The Crayon* 6 (June 1859), p. 193.
116. "The Heart of the Andes," *The Century* (New York), May 21, 1859, p. 4.
117. "Church's 'Heart of the Andes,'" *New York Leader*, May 14, 1859, p. 6.
118. For the controversy stirred by the frame, see Avery, "The Heart of the Andes Exhibited," pp. 55–60.
119. "An Innovation," *Albion*, April 30, 1859, p. 213.
120. "The Heart of the Andes," *New York Evening Post*, April 30, 1859, p. 2.
121. Humboldt, *Cosmos*, vol. 2, pp. 456–57.
122. A projected tour itinerary of London, Paris, Düsseldorf, Berlin, Vienna, Florence, Rome, Naples, Madrid, Lisbon, and further unspecified stops was published in "Church's 'Heart of the Andes,'" *Cosmopolitan Art Journal* 3 (June 1859), p. 133. The artist's intention of having Humboldt see *The Heart of the Andes* was published in "Letter from New York," *Boston Daily Evening Transcript*, May 23, 1859, p. 1; and "Editor's Easy Chair, The Heart of the Andes," *Harper's Monthly* 19 (June 1859), p. 271.
123. Bayard Taylor to His Excellence Baron A.v. Humboldt, Rockford, Illinois, May 16, 1859: "Wenn Sie seine Wahrheit erkennen, und Freude daran empfinden, wird der Maler sich glücklich preisen, den er füllt dass Sie ihm den Weg gezeigt haben, denn er mit so reichen Erfolg gegangen ist." Taylor's account of a meeting with Humboldt in 1856 is given in "An Hour with Humboldt. Letter from Bayard Taylor. From the New York Tribune. Berlin, Tuesday, Nov. 15, 1856," *New York Times*, Jan. 21, 1857, p. 3.

124. Church to Taylor, Hartford, June 13, 1859, in the Bayard Taylor Correspondence, Cornell Regional Archives, Box A-Cr (#2), copy at Olana.
125. W. P. Bayley to Church, London, March 2, 1860, Olana.
126. [W. P. Bayley], "The 'Heart of the Andes,'" *Art-Journal* (Sept. 1859), p. 298.
127. "The Heart of the Andes, painted by Church," *Daily News* (London), July 4, 1859, p. 3, in copies of reviews of *The Heart of the Andes* collected by David Huntington, Olana.
128. *Saturday Review* (London), reprinted in *Albion*, October 8, 1859, p. 48.
129. *Morning Chronicle* (London), July 11, 1859, p. 6.
130. *The Atlas* (London), July 9, 1859, p. 140.
131. "Church's Heart of the Andes," *Saturday Review*, (London) July 9, 1859, p. 720.
132. "Fine Arts. American Landscape-Painting," *Literary Gazette* (London), July 16, 1859, p. 70.
133. Carr, "National Gallery Watercolor," pp. 90–91.
134. For a detailed account of the creation of the engraving, see Carr, "National Gallery Watercolor," pp. 90–95. The author of the watercolor is thought to be one of three members of the same family of English artists, Richard Woodman or his sons, Charles Horwell Woodman and Richard Horwell Woodman.
135. "Wonderful Development of American Art—Uprising of Enthusiasm," *New York Herald*, December 5, 1859, p. 6.
136. The *Venus* shown in New York may be identifiable with the version of the subject in the Detroit Institute of Arts. See Joshua Taylor, *William Page* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp. 149–51, fig. 37; "The Pictures and the Parsons," *New York Herald*, Nov. 1, 1859, p. 6, and "Venus and the Dusseldorf—Another Card from the Director," *New York Herald*, Nov. 1, 1859, p. 6.
137. For *The White Captive*, see Albert Ten Eyck Gardner, *American Sculpture* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1965), pp. 17–18; for *Dream of Italy*, see Nancy Dustin Wall Moure, *William Louis Sonntag* (Los Angeles: Goldfield Galleries, 1980), pp. 22–23; see also "Dusseldorf Gallery," *New York Leader*, Nov. 5, 1859, p. 3. For *The Home of Washington*, see Natalie Spassky, *American Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), vol. 2, pp. 88–91. The above works were reviewed together in "Fine Arts," *New York Herald*, November 21, 1859, p. 5.
138. "Worship of Art," *Boston Daily Evening Transcript*, Feb. 3, 1860, p. 2.
139. "The Heart of the Andes," *Boston Daily Evening Transcript*, Jan. 13, 1860, p. 2.
140. "The Heart of the Andes," *Boston Daily Evening Transcript*, Dec. 15, 1860, p. 2.
141. "Dear Register," unidentified newsclipping hand-inscribed, "Christian Register, Boston, Jan. 14, –60," in reviews of *The Heart of the Andes* collected by David Huntington, Olana.
142. Richard T. Miller to Church, Philadelphia, March 15, 1860, at Olana. In a postscript to his letter Miller added that the editor of *Pennsylvanian* asked him to write an editorial on *The Heart of the Andes*. Miller gladly complied.
143. John McClure to Church, Philadelphia, Feb. 4, 1860, Olana.
144. McClure to Church, Chicago, Jan. 19, 1861, Olana.
145. McClure to Church, Baltimore, April 10, 1860, Olana.
146. McClure to Church, Philadelphia, Feb. 4, 1860, Olana.
147. McClure to Church, Baltimore, April 10, 1860, Olana.
148. McClure to Church, Baltimore, May 14, 1860, Olana.
149. "Art Matters," *Cincinnati Commercial*, Dec. 21, 1860, p. 2.
150. "Heart of the Andes," *Chicago Tribune*, Feb. 13, 1861, p. 1.
151. [John McClure], "Heart of the Andes. Statement [of receipts and expenses for the western tour], May 1, 1861," Olana.
152. Samuel Clemens to Orion Clemens, St. Louis, March 18, 1860 [sic], repr. in Albert Bigelow Paine, ed., *Mark Twain's Letters* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1917), vol. 1, pp. 45–46.
153. [McClure], "Heart of the Andes Statement": receipts for the Brooklyn venue were \$290.76 against \$542.19 in expenses.
154. Between the exhibitions of *The Heart of the Andes* and *Icebergs*, Church showed his culminative North American landscape, *Twilight in the Wilderness* (1860; Cleveland Museum of Art) at Goupil's Gallery in New York in June–July 1860. This work was done on commission and was only half as large as the other paintings. For a thorough account, see Kelly, *Church and the National Landscape*, pp. 102–22.
155. "Church's Heart of the Andes," *Harper's Weekly* 7 (April 4, 1863), p. 210.
156. Carr, *The Icebergs*, pp. 28–29, characterizes the relationship between Church's "triptych," Martin's *Judgment*, and Cole's pictorial serials.
157. W. P. Bayley, "Mr. Church's Pictures. Cotopaxi, Chimborazo, Aurora Borealis," *Art-Journal* n.s. 4 (Sept. 1865), p. 265. Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin and our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, published in London in 1757, is analyzed in Walter Hipple, *The Beautiful, the Sublime, and the Picturesque in Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetic Theory* (Carbondale, Ill.: The Southern Illinois University Press, 1957).
158. John K. Howat, *American Paradise: The World of the Hudson River School*, exh. cat., Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, 1987), pp. 246–50, 255–62.

159. Church painted three more major tropical paintings: *Rainy Season in the Tropics* (1866; Museums of Fine Arts, San Francisco); *The Vale of St. Thomas, Jamaica* (1867; The Wadsworth Athenaeum, Hartford, Connecticut); and *Morning in the Tropics* (1877; The National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.).
160. See Carrie Rebora's entry on *Autumn—On the Hudson River* in Howat, *American Paradise*, pp. 206–7.
161. For the later pictures, see Rebora, in Howat, *American Paradise*, pp. 208–13, and William S. Talbot, *Jasper F. Cropsey, 1823–1900* (diss. New York University, 1972; repr. New York: Garland Publishing, 1977), pp. 172–83.
162. "Düsseldorf Gallery," *New York Leader*, Nov. 5, 1859, p. 3; Nancy Dustin Wall Moure, *William Louis Sonntag* (Los Angeles: Goldfield Galleries, 1980), pp. 22–23.
163. See Thomas W. Leavitt, *George Loring Brown*, exh. cat., The Robert Hull Fleming Museum (Burlington, Vt., 1973), p. 23. Besides *The Crown of New England*, discussed in the text, the other two pictures were *The Bay and City of New York* (1860; Sandringham House, Norfolk, England) and a moonlight view of Niagara Falls (unlocated).
164. "(Correspondence of the Transcript.) Letter from New York. New York, December 2, 1874," *Boston Daily Evening Transcript*, Dec. 4, 1874, p. 6. I thank Franklin Kelly for this reference.
165. According to information provided by David David, Inc., the copy was commissioned by J. B. Bennett of Cincinnati. For contemporary notices of Duncanson's copy, see Joseph D. Ketner, *The Emergence of the African-American Artist: Robert S. Duncanson* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993), p. 174. Records of at least two other copies, by unknown artists, are in the archives on *The Heart of the Andes* in the Department of American Paintings and Sculpture, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
166. For *Land of the Lotus Eaters* and its close links to *The Heart of the Andes*, see Ketner, pp. 89–93, 112–13; Guy McElroy, "Robert S. Duncanson (1821–1872): A Study of the Artist's Life and Work," in *Robert S. Duncanson: A Centennial Exhibition*, exh. cat., Cincinnati Art Museum (Cincinnati, 1972), pp. 13–14; Manthorne, *Tropical Renaissance*, p. 56.
167. Michael W. Schantz, *Edmund Darch Lewis, 1835–1910*, exh. cat., Woodmere Art Museum (Philadelphia, 1985), pp. 6–8, fig. 2.
168. Manthorne, *Tropical Renaissance*, p. 55.
169. For discussions of these artists see Manthorne, *Tropical Renaissance*, pp. 32, 60, 178, 183, 188; and Marjorie Arkelian, *Tropical: Tropical Scenes by the 19th Century Painters of California*, exh. cat., The Oakland Museum (Oakland, 1971), pp. 29–30, 42.
170. The most extensive discussion of Mignot's life and works thus far is Manthorne, *Tropical Renaissance*, pp. 133–57. A retrospective of the artist's works is currently being planned.
171. For Heade's South American landscapes and hummingbird pictures, see Theodore E. Stebbins, Jr., *The Life and Works of Martin Johnson Heade* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), pp. 84–94, 126–54, cat. nos. 68–94, 114–15, 133–37, 193–99, 221–27, 254–57, 277–86.
172. The most prominent example is Bierstadt's large, recently rediscovered *Lake Lucerne* (1858; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.), described and illustrated in Nancy K. Anderson and Linda S. Ferber, *Albert Bierstadt: Art and Enterprise*, exh. cat., The Brooklyn Museum (Brooklyn, 1991), pp. 129–31.
173. For Bierstadt's first western journey, see Anderson and Ferber, *Albert Bierstadt*, pp. 71–73; Gerald L. Carr, "The Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak," in Howat, *American Paradise*, pp. 285–88; Spassky, *American Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, vol. 2, pp. 319–26; Gordon Hendricks, *Albert Bierstadt: Painter of the American West* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1974), pp. 63–87.
174. Carr, in Howat, *American Paradise*, p. 286; "Bierstadt's Great Picture. Lander's Peak in the Rocky Mountains," *New York Evening Post*, April 2, 1864, p. 1.
175. The significance of the Metropolitan Fair for the founding of The Metropolitan Museum of Art is discussed in Winifred E. Howe, *A History of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1913), pp. 90–92; Calvin Tomkins, *Merchants and Masterpieces: The Story of The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, revised edition (Henry Holt and Company, 1989), pp. 28–29. For a portrait of the contemporary response to the Metropolitan Fair art gallery, see *A Record of the Metropolitan Fair in aid of the U.S. Sanitary Commission held at New York in April 1864* (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1867), pp. 97–103.
176. "Art Department," *New York Herald*, April 4, 1864, p. 2.
177. "Fine Arts," *New York Times*, Feb. 22, 1864, p. 4.
178. A photograph of part of the stage and backdrop in Bierstadt's Indian Department is reproduced in Anderson and Ferber, *Albert Bierstadt*, p. 32, fig. 10. Bierstadt's management of the Indian Department and the public response to it is described in detail in *Record of the Metropolitan Fair*, pp. 49–53, 200–205.
179. "Art Gallery of the Sanitary Fair," *New York Times*, April 11, 1864, p. 2.
180. For accounts of the decline of the Hudson River School, see Kevin J. Avery, "A Historiography of the Hudson River School," and Doreen Bolger Burke and Catherine Hoover Voorsanger, "The Hudson River School in Eclipse," in Howat, *American Paradise*, pp. 3–11, 71–90.
181. This unlocated painting was said by Inness's son, George Inness, Jr., to have been repainted as *Peace and Plenty*, now in the Metropolitan Museum, but this has not been confirmed through X-rays or other evidence. For *Peace and Plenty*, see Spassky, *American Paintings in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, vol. 2, pp. 253–56.

182. Carr, *The Icebergs*, p. 80, discusses the allusion to the Civil War in the subtitle *The North* applied to Church's *Icebergs* in its premier exhibition in May 1861. Huntington, "Frederic Church and Luminism," in Wilmerding, *American Light*, p. 182, discusses the allusions to the Civil War in *Cotopaxi*. See also the discussion of *Cotopaxi*'s symbolic import in Manthorne, *Creation and Renewal*, pp. 48–51.
183. "The Sign of Promise," by George Inness. Now on Exhibition at Snedecor's Gallery, 768 Broadway, New York, quoted in Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr., *The Life and Work of George Inness* (diss. Harvard University, 1965; repr. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1977), p. 193.
184. James Jackson Jarves, *The Art-Idea*, ed. Benjamin Rowland (1864; repr. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960), p. 205.
185. "Notes. The Blodgett Gallery," *Art Journal* n.s. 2 (June 1876), p. 192.
186. Undated note in *The Heart of the Andes* archives of the Department of American Paintings and Sculpture, addressed to "Josephine" and containing information said to have been obtained from Isabella Field Judson (daughter of Cyrus Field), states that the painting "hung in Mr. Dows house right as you entered."
187. The reactions of visitors to Blodgett's private gallery are recorded in "Pictures in the Private Galleries of New York. I. Galleries of Belmont and Blodgett," *Putnam's Magazine* n.s. 5 (May 1870), pp. 537–40, and "The Week in Art," *New York Times*, May 26, 1900, p. 348. The writer of the latter piece noted that *The Heart of the Andes* "had been in retirement for some years."
188. "Frederic E. Church Dead," *New York Times*, April 8, 1900, p. 16.
189. "The Week in Art," *New York Times*, May 26, 1900, p. 348.
190. I am grateful to John K. Howat for informing me of the kinship between Robert deForest and Isabel Carnes.
191. R. W. deF[orest], "Church's 'Heart of the Andes,'" *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 4 (April 1909), p. 70.
192. B.B.[Bryson Burroughs], "Paintings of the Hudson River School Brought Together in Commemoration of the Completion of the Catskill Aqueduct," *Supplement to the Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (Oct. 1917), pp. 6–7.
193. See Edith A. Standen and Thomas M. Folds, *Masterpieces of Painting in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1970; catalogue for a loan exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), pp. 8, 107; Kelly, *Frederic Edwin Church*, p. 202, cat. no. 33.
194. For an example of this limited view, see "Pictures of Hudson River. Early American Artist's Work on View in Natural History Museum [sic]," *New York Times*, Oct. 12, 1917, p. 10.
195. Frank M. Chapman, "The Andes: A New World," *Natural History* 24 (July–Aug. 1924), pp. 421–28.
196. "Alexander von Humboldt, South American Explorer and Progenitor of Explorers," *Natural History* 24 (July–Aug. 1924), pp. 449–53.
197. H. W. Schwarz, "Frederic E. Church, Painter of the Andes," *Natural History* 24 (July–Aug. 1924), pp. 442–48.
198. Frederick A. Sweet, *The Hudson River School and the Early American Landscape Tradition*, exh. cat., The Art Institute of Chicago (Chicago, 1945), p. 100.
199. Albert Ten Eyck Gardner, "Scientific Sources of the Full-Length Landscape: 1850," *Bulletin of The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, n.s. 4 (Oct. 1945), pp. 55–65.
200. The supersession of Humboldt's and Church's worldview by Darwin's has been most authoritatively addressed in Gould, "Church, Humboldt, and Darwin," in Kelly, *Frederic Edwin Church*, pp. 94–108.
201. For a recent expression of this view, see Edward O. Wilson, "Is Humanity Suicidal?" *New York Times Magazine*, May 30, 1993, pp. 24–29.

